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The Truth Speaks

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'PRAHAAR': India's new doctrine of war against terror

India unveils maiden counter-terrorism policy, which aims to prevent attacks, counter online radicalisation and strengthen national security across borders

NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday unveiled India's first comprehensive anti-terror policy 'PRAHAAR', marking a major shift in the country's strategy to counter terrorism in all its forms.

The new policy recognise that terror threats have evolved beyond traditional methods to include cross-border militancy, cyber-based campaigns, and misuse of modern technology, and seeks to build a modern, proactive, and coordinated national response to safeguard the nation.

By combining advanced intelligence systems, community involvement, and legal strategy, PRAHAAR aims to create a proactive and adaptive counter-terror architecture that can better protect India's security interests in a rapidly changing world.

By building stronger legal cases, engaging communities, and modernising security infrastructure, PRAHAAR stands as a significant policy step to safeguard India against both traditional and evolving terror threats.

'PRAHAAR' stands for

- **P**revention of terror attacks to protect Indian citizens and interests
- **R**esponses, which are swift and proportionate to the threat posed
- **A**ggregating internal capacities for achieving synergy in a whole-of-government approach
- **H**uman rights and 'Rule of Law' based processes for mitigation of threats
- **A**ttenuating the conditions enabling terrorism, including radicalization
- **A**ligning and shaping the international efforts to counter terrorism
- **R**ecovery and resilience through a whole-of-society approach.

What is PRAHAAR Policy?

PRAHAAR (which means "strike") is a strategic framework issued by the MHA that outlines how India will prevent, disrupt, and prosecute terrorism and extremist threats. It identifies that terror risks now extend across land, water, and air, and include threats from state and non-state actors, criminal hackers, and hybrid networks that exploit digital platforms and drones. The police emphasises that India does not associate terrorism with any religion, ethnicity, nationality, or civilisation, even as it points to longstanding concerns about "sponsored terrorism" from across the border and global extremist groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, trying to create sleeper cells or incite violence in the country.

What PRAHAAR aims to achieve?

- Preventing terror attacks before they occur
- Strengthening coordination between central and state agencies
- Protecting human rights within legal frameworks
- Reducing conditions that foster terrorism
- Cooperating with global partners against terrorism
- Building resilient communities
- Addressing high-tech threats like cyberattacks and digital recruitment

How India will implement it?

The country will take a real-time, intelligence-driven approach with closer coordination among units like the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) and Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI). Security forces at border regions will receive technological upgrades, while local police will act as first responders supported by specialised units when needed. Investigatory bodies such as NIA and state police will lead efforts to prevent attacks and disrupt extremist activities.

Too early to gauge US tariff impact on India: FM Nirmala

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said it was "too early" to comment on the economic implications of the tariff revisions announced by the United States, noting that the commerce ministry is currently reviewing the situation.

Her remarks come amid fresh uncertainty over US trade policy. The US Supreme Court delivered a verdict against sweeping import tariffs imposed during the Trump administration. Subsequently, President Donald Trump announced a 10% tariff on all countries, including India, effective February 24 for a period of 150 days. A day later, the tariffs were raised to 15%.

When asked how the changes could affect the Indian economy, Sitharaman told reporters, "It is a bit too soon to comment." "On trade particularly, aside from the Indian economy in general, the commerce ministry is reviewing the situation. The delegation will have to take a call on when they are going to go for further negotiations. So it's a bit too early for me (to comment)," she added.

'India is on a clear path to getting trade deals; gold and silver imports have not crossed such a high proportion'.

India-US talks rescheduled

India and the US have decided to reschedule a proposed meeting of their chief negotiators that was to begin in Washington on Monday to finalise the text of an interim trade pact, say sources. Joint Secretary in the commerce ministry Darpan Jain is India's chief negotiator for the agreement. As per the report, while no new date has been officially announced, the delay comes as both sides reassess the evolving tariff landscape.

'India's trade strategy remains unchanged'

She stressed that India remains committed to expanding its global trade footprint. "India has been on a very clear path of wanting to have trade deals," she said, pointing to pacts already concluded with Australia, New Zealand, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, the EU and the UK. "So, therefore, our attempt to have a trade agreement will go on with countries," she said.

Mis-selling is offence under BNS: FM to banks

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday issued a warning to banks against mis-selling financial products, stressing that such practices now constitute an offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Addressing the media after her customery post-Budget interaction with the RBI Central Board here on Monday, Sitharaman said banks must prioritise deposit mobilisation, customer engagement and prudent lending, the fundamentals of what she described as "core banking."

"To know your customer, reach out to them, mobilise deposits and make your money from what you are meant to do. That is core banking," she said.

She noted that a few years ago, several banks had stretched themselves beyond traditional functions, expanding into multiple activities while losing the comfort of low-cost CASA (Current Account Savings Account) deposits. At the same time, the government tightened oversight and pushed for more professional handling of credit assessment and performance standards.

The Finance Minister also flagged concerns around mis-selling of insurance products by banks, describing it as a major issue that hurt customers.

Power tussle: 30 first-time Cong MLAs write to Kharge seeking Cabinet berths

BENGALURU

At least thirty first-time Congress legislators have written to the party high command requesting to induct them in the Cabinet during the proposed reshuffle.

The copy of the letter accessed by DH, which has been signed by the MLAs, has been addressed to Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Mallikarjun Kharge and copied to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his deputy D K Shivakumar and AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala (AICC General Secretary-In charge Karnataka).

In the letter, the MLAs have requested the party's high command to include the first-time members of the Legislative Assembly in the Cabinet during the proposed reshuffle of the ministry in the Karnataka state government.

"As you're aware, the people of Karnataka have elected 38 members to Legislative Assembly from the Indian National Congress for the first time and thereby sent out a clear message that they want to see new young faces in the legislature and that's also an aspiration of the people of the people of Karnataka," reads the letter.

QUICK READ

Post SIR, TN voter count drops to 5.67 cr

CHENNAI: After the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Tamil Nadu's total voter count now stands at 5.67 crore, a drop of around 74 lakh voters or 11.5% from the 6.41 crore listed before the exercise began on October 27, 2025. When the draft rolls were published on December 19, following the enumeration period of the SIR, 97.34 lakh names were removed from the electoral rolls. Addressing the media at the State Secretariat, Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik said that after the claims and objections period concluded on January 30, 2026, 27.53 lakh voters were added to the rolls while 4.23 lakh names were deleted. Of the 5.67 crore voters, 2.77 crore are men and 2.89 crore are women, with 12.51 lakh voters aged 18-19 years.

India asks citizens to leave Iran amid Tehran-US tensions

TEHRAN

Indian Embassy in Iran has issued advisory in view of "evolving situation in Iran" on Monday. In an official statement, the Embassy said the advisory is in continuation of the government's earlier notice issued on January 5, 2026, and reiterated on January 14, 2026.

"Indian nationals who are currently in Iran (students, pilgrims, business persons, and tourists) are advised to leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights," the embassy posted on X.

While providing emergency contact helplines of the Indian Embassy, the advisory also requested to have travel and immigration documents, including passports and IDs readily available.

The Embassy further reiterated that all Indian citizens and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in Iran should exercise due caution, avoid areas witnessing protests or demonstrations, remain in close contact with the Indian Embassy, and regularly monitor local media for updates.

This comes after thousands of Iranian students staged anti-government protests at universities in Tehran and other cities for a second consecutive day, on Sunday, as campuses reopened a month after deadly nationwide unrest.

Ex-rly min Mukul Roy dies

KOLKATA

Former Railway Minister and senior Trinamool Congress leader Mukul Roy passed away on Monday at Apollo Hospital in Kolkata's Salt Lake after suffering a cardiac arrest at 1.30 am, his son Subhranshu Roy said. He was 71.

He was suffering from multiple ailments, including Parkinson's disease, and had undergone three surgeries. He was admitted to the hospital for over two years and was in a coma, Subhranshu said.

Who was Mukul Roy?

Born on April 17, 1954, in Kanchrapara in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, Roy was the son of Jugal Nath Roy and Rekha Roy.

Roy was among the founding members of the Trinamool Congress in 1998 and later became the party's national general secretary. Later, following differences with the party, he joined the BJP in 2017.

Often called the 'Chanakya of Bengal politics' for his sharp political mind, he was once considered the second most powerful leader in the party after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

After helping the Trinamool Congress defeat the Left Front and come to power in West Bengal in 2011, he was appointed Minister of State for Shipping in the UPA II government and later served as Railway Minister from March to September 2012. He also a former Rajya Sabha member.

His ties with the Trinamool Congress began to weaken after his name came up in investigations linked to the Saradha chit fund scam and the Narada sting operation

Pained by the passing of former Union Minister Shri Mukul Roy Ji. He will be remembered for his political experience and efforts to serve society. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti.

—Narendra Modi, PM

FIRM ON STAND

16.12 cr people lost their jobs: CM at 'MGNREGA Bachao' stir

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday expressed serious concern over the impact of discontinuation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme, claiming that nearly 16.12 crore people have lost their jobs, of whom 53% are women and 28% belong to the Scheduled Castes community.

Addressing the 'MGNREGA Bachao' protest in Chikkaballapur, the Chief Minister emphasised that the scheme had earlier guaranteed 100 days of wage employment to rural labourers and supported the operations of gram panchayats.

He alleged that the discontinuation of MGNREGA has adversely affected rural livelihoods and left gram panchayats without adequate work.

Stressing the importance of the scheme, Siddaramaiah said that protecting it has become extremely essential to safeguard the right to employment of rural workers.

He demanded that the current framework replacing MGNREGA be completely halted and the original scheme be reinstated, restoring what he termed as the people's right to guaranteed employment.

'Fix ₹400 as minimum daily wage under the scheme'

Furthermore, he urged the Centre to fix a minimum wage of Rs 400 per day under the scheme. Siddaramaiah also asserted that the protest would continue until MGNREGA is fully restored and employment security for rural workers is ensured.

30% of K'taka's elected representatives corrupt, ready to give names: KSCA prez

CHITRADURGA

Karnataka State Contractors Association (KSCA) president R Manjunath on Monday alleged that 30% of the state's elected representatives are corrupt and said he is ready to provide a list with their names if Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asks for it.

Addressing the media here, he said there is a pending amount of Rs 37,000 crore owed to contractors across the state and demanded immediate release of the funds.

He also criticised the Chief Minister for not resolving the pending payment issue despite holding multiple meetings. "Siddaramaiah should not say the previous government did it. The government means everyone is responsible," he said and warned of a major protest, Manjunath announced that at Freedom Park on March 6 along with their families.

Activists decry amended lake buffer law

Environmentalists say reduced lake buffers threaten fragile urban ecosystems

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's lake conservation activists have strongly criticised the state government's notification of the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (Amendment) Act, 2025, which revises the uniform 30-metre buffer zone around lakes and replaces it with graded limits based on size.

Under the amendment, tanks above 100 acres will retain a 30m buffer. Lakes between 25–100 acres will have a 24m buffer; 10–25 acres, 12m; 1–10 acres, 6m; and 0.1–1 acre, just 3m. The revised law also permits construction of roads, bridges, water supply lines and high-tension towers within buffer areas, subject to conditions that the original water-holding capacity is not reduced.

Sandeep Anirudhan, convenor of Bengaluru Town Hall, criticised the timing of the notification, noting that the matter is pending before the National Green Tribunal, which has taken suo motu cognisance and issued notices to the government. He argued that the amendment impacts not only Bengaluru but nearly 45,000 lakes across Karnataka.

According to Anirudhan, buffer zones serve as protective barriers against contamination and unchecked development. "Reducing them will, over time, render lakes unusable and trigger food and livelihood crises, especially affecting agriculture and fisheries," he warned, alleging that the move benefits real estate interests.

Madhuri Subbarao, co-founder of Friends of Lakes, questioned the scientific basis of scaling down buffers for smaller lakes. She pointed out that small lakes fill up faster during intense rainfall and rely on wider buffer zones as safety shields against flooding and breaches. "Reducing buffer zones purely based on size is neither hydrologically sound nor environmentally responsible," she said.

A senior official from the Bengaluru Central City Corporation noted that only four lakes fall within its jurisdiction — Ulsoor (106 acres), Kaggadasapura (47 acres), Kelagina Byrasandra (12 acres) and Chickpet Byrasandra (15 acres). Of these, only Ulsoor will retain the 30m buffer, while the others will see reduced limits under the new framework.

Activists have urged transparent public consultation and science-based policy decisions to safeguard the city's fragile lake systems.

QUICK READ

School bus brake failure sparks scare; students safe

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A school bus belonging to National Public School met with an accident near Mahalaxmi Layout on Monday after reportedly suffering a brake failure. The vehicle rammed into an electric pole, triggering panic in the area. Fortunately, the 8 to 10 children on board escaped without injuries, averting what could have been a major tragedy. Officials from the Malleshwaram Traffic Police rushed to the spot and conducted an inspection. Local MLA Gopalaiah also visited the site and stressed the need for strict maintenance checks on school buses to prevent such incidents.

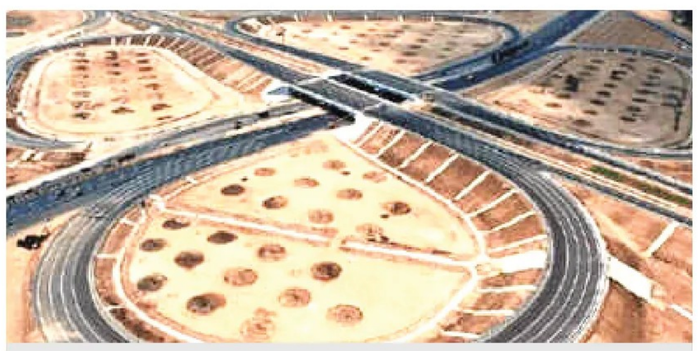
Friend misuses account details, ₹7 cr siphoned in cyber fraud

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A shocking case of cyber fraud involving the transfer of ₹7 crore through a student's bank account has come to light in Bengaluru. The accused, identified as Ayush, allegedly conspired with others to cheat the student, who had been his friend for over a year. According to the complaint, Ayush claimed that his own bank account was blocked and requested the student's help. Trusting him, the victim handed over his passbook, ATM card and mobile SIM linked to the account. Soon after, the student received a call from the bank informing him that ₹7 crore had been transferred through his account in a suspected cyber fraud. The account was immediately frozen. A case has been registered at the North Division Cyber Police Station, and further investigation is underway.

B'luru–Chennai Expressway set for early 2027 completion after delays

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



As per a recent court directive, senior lenders have proposed substituting the concessionaire through a letter dated January 20, 2026. Being a greenfield corridor, the expressway can be commissioned only after completion of all packages, including the stalled Arakkonam–Kancheepuram section, the Minister clarified.

The long-awaited Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway, envisioned as a high-speed corridor linking Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, has been pushed back yet again, with full completion now expected in early 2027.

Originally slated for 2024 and later revised to June 2026, the project has faced multiple hurdles, including pending forest clearances, land acquisition challenges and financial stress faced by contractors.

Currently, the 72-km Karnataka stretch between Hoskote and KGF is fully operational and has been open for nearly a year. However, progress in the other two states remains incomplete. The 85-km Andhra Pradesh segment is about 92 per cent complete, while the 106-km Tamil Nadu portion stands at roughly 80 per cent completion.

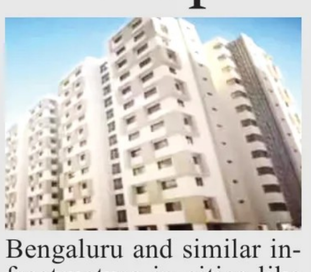
A key bottleneck is the 25.5-km Arakkonam–Kancheepuram stretch in Tamil Nadu, where work has come to a standstill since May 2025 due to financial constraints of the concessionaire. In Parliament, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed the Lok Sabha that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has initiated steps to terminate the contract.

Once completed, the greenfield expressway is designed for speeds up to 120 kmph and is expected to reduce travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai from six to seven hours to just over two hours. At present, commuters travel along the conventional 340-km route via Hosur, Krishnagiri, Vellore and Kancheepuram.

Expectations had risen sharply after Gadkari inspected the project site in Hoskote in January 2023 and announced an ambitious completion target. However, seamless high-speed connectivity across the three states remains a year away.

Bengaluru drives housing boom; 8.7 L homes lined up

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



Karnataka's residential real estate sector is witnessing robust growth, driven largely by employment expansion in Bengaluru and rising urbanisation across the state. Nearly 8.7 lakh housing units, covering about 7,000 lakh sq ft of carpet area, are currently in the pipeline across 4,452 projects registered with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).

The state ranks fourth nationally in terms of the number of residential units under development, reflecting sustained buyer confidence and formal market participation. Industry experts say the increase in both unit count and carpet area indicates that more homebuyers are opting for slightly larger homes in the post-Covid era.

CH Ramachandra, Joint Secretary of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) National Chapter, said housing demand remains strong as financial growth from industrial and infrastructure sectors eventually flows into residential markets. However, he cautioned that project timelines of four to six years can still be impacted by labour shortages, market fluctuations and delays in approvals or utility connections.

He pointed out that improved connectivity, such as the Outer Ring Road in Bengaluru and similar infrastructure in cities like Hyderabad and Mumbai, has significantly boosted real estate growth. Increasing demand from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities is also contributing to the expansion.

Bhaskar T Nagendrappa, President of the CREDAI-Karnataka chapter, attributed Karnataka's strong position to Bengaluru's thriving tech ecosystem, pleasant climate and robust connectivity. While Bengaluru continues to dominate the apartment market, cities such as Mangaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi and Belagavi are also witnessing growing acceptance of apartment living, even though plotted developments remain popular in many areas.

Builder associations across India note that residential growth is primarily driven by urbanisation, job creation and rising purchasing power. Like Maharashtra's expansion beyond Mumbai, Thane and Pune, Karnataka is now seeing similar momentum in Mysuru and Mangaluru, with experts emphasising the need to further boost employment in these emerging urban centres.

Ambulance stopped after grazing car, driver abused near Anekal

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An ambulance rushing to attend to a critically ill patient was allegedly stopped and its driver abused after the vehicle grazed a car near Alliance University at Anekal in Bengaluru Rural district, triggering public outrage. Based on a complaint filed by ambulance driver Gnanendra, police registered a case and detained two persons — Vasanth from Anekal and Bharath from Hosur in Tamil Nadu — for questioning. The incident occurred when a 108 Arogya Kavacha ambulance set out from Anekal with its siren on. While navigating a narrow stretch of road in front of the university campus, the ambulance reportedly brushed against a car that was either moving slowly or partially obstructing the roadside. Instead of allowing the emergency vehicle to proceed, the car driver, allegedly joined by a few students, stopped the ambulance and entered into a heated argument. Despite the driver repeatedly explaining that he was responding to a medical emergency, the vehicle was blocked for nearly 10 to 15 minutes. The driver was also allegedly subjected to verbal abuse. Police personnel arrived at the spot and brought the situation under control. A video of the incident shows the ambulance driver urging the car owner to take photographs and file a complaint later, but the argument continued, delaying the ambulance. Under traffic regulations, motorists are legally required to give free passage to emergency vehicles, including ambulances and fire engines. Obstructing them can invite penalties and legal action.

Student alleges gang rape after being drugged

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 19-year-old private college student has alleged that she was gang-raped after being administered drugs by two acquaintances she had met through social media. Based on her complaint, the Amruthahalli police have registered a case against Dixon Sandra and Nikhil.

The survivor, a native of Tamil Nadu studying in Bengaluru, stated that she became acquainted with Dixon, a resident of West Bengal, through Instagram. In her complaint, she alleged that Dixon expressed love for her and invited her to a villa in Jakkur on February 14. She went there along with a friend. At the villa, Dixon and Nikhil allegedly forced her to consume a pill.

The complainant alleged that after she became semi-conscious, the two sexually assaulted her. She further claimed that they threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the incident to anyone. Shocked and traumatised, she later informed her brother and approached the police to file a complaint. Following the complaint, police registered a case and initiated an investigation. Medical examination and other legal procedures are under way.

Dairy Secy assaulted after rejecting substandard milk

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A routine milk quality inspection at Goravigere village turned violent after a group of suppliers allegedly assaulted and threatened the secretary of the local Milk Producers' Cooperative Society.

The injured secretary, Thulasamma, lodged a complaint with Avalahalli police accusing Siddesh, Vijay Kumar, Naveen Kumar, Mahesh and Babu of attacking her during the morning collection process.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred between 8 am and 8.20 am when Thulasamma was checking milk brought for procurement. She reportedly found the quality to be below prescribed standards. While standard milk should contain at least 3.5 percent fat, the milk supplied by the accused allegedly ranged between 1.9 percent and 2.9 percent fat, with water content between 30 percent and 40 percent. Citing poor quality, she refused to accept the milk.

This reportedly angered the suppliers, who began verbally abusing her. Thulasamma alleged that they made inappropriate remarks about her attire — she was wearing a sweater over a nightie — and physically assaulted her by pulling her hands, causing injuries. She further claimed the group threatened her with dire consequences and warned that they would not "leave her".

Ordered iPhone, got a dud; Jalahalli man wins ₹1.3 lakh refund

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A Jalahalli resident who ordered a premium smartphone online but received a used and allegedly fake device has won a full refund after approaching the consumer court.

Ashoka Bhat, 39, placed an order for a black iPhone 14 Pro Max worth Rs 1.3 lakh on Amazon. However, Bhat claimed the device inside appeared used and did not look original. Shocked by the condition of the phone, he immediately sought a refund.

Initially, Amazon asked him to wait for three days before initiating further action. Later, the company apologised and arranged for a return pickup. However, Amazon and the seller, Appario Retail, later contended that Bhat had returned the wrong product.

After his legal notice allegedly went unanswered, Bhat filed a complaint before the First Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, seeking a full refund.

In its defence, Appario Retail stated that the product was delivered through Amazon's authorised logistics partner and argued that the grievance related to delivery, over which it had no direct role. Amazon maintained that the sale transaction was strictly between Bhat and Appario, pointing out that the tax invoice was issued by the seller and that payments were routed to Appario through a separate nodal account.

Amazon further claimed that an internal enquiry showed Bhat had returned a different product. After examining records and hearing both sides, the Commission observed that neither company produced evidence proving that the delivered product matched the one ordered. It noted that Amazon failed to examine the delivery personnel or provide cogent proof to counter the complainant's claim.

The Commission, comprising President Syed Anser Kaleem and member Sharavathi SM, directed Amazon and Appario to jointly refund Rs 1.3 lakh to Bhat, along with Rs 2,000 towards litigation costs.

Bengaluru North tightens segregation rules

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru North City Corporation and Bengaluru Central City Corporation have launched parallel initiatives to strengthen waste management and improve urban cleanliness through stricter enforcement and large-scale field action.

Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar has made segregation of waste at source mandatory, aiming to reduce reliance on landfill sites and prevent recurring protests near dumping yards. Under the new directives, wet waste from households will be processed for composting, while dry waste will be diverted to recycling units and waste-to-energy plants.

Setting a firm target, the commissioner instructed Assistant General Managers (AGMs) and Deputy General Managers (DGMs) to achieve 65–70 percent segregated waste collection by March 2026. Health inspectors, link workers, marshals and pourakarmikas have been tasked with meeting this goal. Officials were also directed to actively cooperate in Swachh Survekshan 2025–26, with the first phase of a special cleanliness drive scheduled from March 1 to 8. The corporation aims to eliminate all garbage vulnerable points, commonly known as black spots, and has mandated strict penalties against public urination and spitting near skywalks and other public areas.

TECHNOLOGY REDUCES CRIME

AI Boost for City Police: Robbery Down 47%, Chain Snatching Drops 53%

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

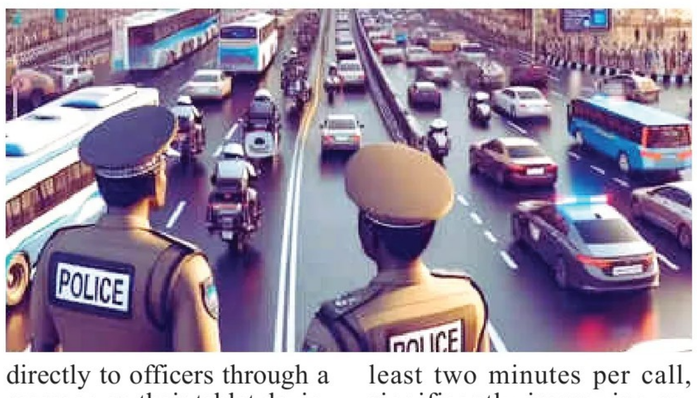
The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into city policing has yielded significant results, with major crimes witnessing a sharp decline over the past year, according to city police records.

A comparison of crime data from 2023, 2024 and 2025 shows a marked reduction in several key offences. Robbery cases dropped by 47 percent, chain snatching by 53 percent, house break theft at night by 20 percent, motor vehicle theft by 19 percent, molestation by 20 percent and rape cases by 30 percent.

City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh attributed the decline primarily to the introduction of AI-driven systems in police operations.

He said many of the crimes that fell were typically committed at night. Earlier, emergency calls made to the police control room (112) were handled manually. A command centre official would receive the call, note the complaint, identify the jurisdictional police station, trace the Hoysala patrol vehicle attached to it, and then communicate the assignment. The process consumed valuable time.

With AI integration, the response system has become automated. When a caller contacts the control room, the system instantly traces the caller's location. AI then identifies the nearest Hoysala patrol unit and assigns the task



directly to officers through a message on their tablet devices. This automation saves at least two minutes per call, significantly improving response time.

Faster deployment enables Hoysala personnel to reach the spot quickly, preventing escalation of incidents such as fights, mob clashes or riots. Citizens can also alert police about incidents in other areas by sharing precise locations or mobile numbers for swift verification and action.

Singh noted that Hoysalas now play a more proactive role, especially during night hours. Earlier, patrol vehicles responded mainly after receiving calls. Now, in the absence of emergency calls, they conduct regular patrols alongside jurisdictional police teams.

The enhanced night patrolling has helped police detect suspicious activity, detain miscreants and deter potential offenders. Officials believe this visible and rapid policing presence is a key factor behind the noticeable drop in robbery, chain snatching, night house break thefts and vehicle theft cases across the city.

Media Restrictions at Vidhana Soudha Not Political, Says Basavaraj Horatti

Horatti assured full media cooperation, emphasizing the government-media interdependence and importance of respectful, responsible functioning

BIDAR

Chairman of the Karnataka Legislative Council, Basavaraj Horatti, clarified that media restrictions at Vidhana Soudha are necessary, not politically motivated.

Addressing concerns over the recent limitations on media access, Horatti stressed that these measures should not be seen as targeting any particular group. "I am not speaking politically. The media plays a very important role. If a few members of the media make mistakes, it should not be applied to everyone. We should not generalize because of one person's fault," he explained.

At the same time, he emphasized the need for maintaining discipline and decorum within the legislative premises. Horatti pointed out that there have been instances where media personnel crowded corridors and obstructed movement, making it necessary to implement certain arrangements to ensure smooth functioning and order.

He added that he plans to discuss the issue with the Chief Minister and other concerned ministers to improve coordination and convenience for media representatives.

"When the government communicates something, the media should behave in a decent manner. The media must be present, but it should function in an appropriate and orderly way," he said.

Reaffirming his support for the press, Horatti assured full cooperation to the media fraternity and highlighted the interdependent relationship between the government and the media. "We and the media are interconnected — we cannot exist without you, and you cannot function without us," he remarked, underlining the importance of mutual respect and understanding between both sides.

Horatti's statements aim to clarify that the restrictions are about maintaining order and efficiency rather than political considerations, and he urged all media representatives to continue performing their essential role responsibly.

QUICK READ

Prohibitory Orders for PU Exams

Vijayapura

Ahead of the Second PUC Annual Exams from February 28 to March 17, prohibitory orders have been enforced around all 64 exam centres in Vijayapura district. District Magistrate Dr. Anand K has declared a 200-metre radius around each centre as a prohibited area from 8 am until exams conclude daily. Within this zone, photocopy shops, computer centres, cyber cafés, and coaching centres will remain closed. The measures aim to ensure smooth and fair conduct of the exams.

English Translation of Allamaprabhu Vachanas Released

Vijayapura

The English translation of Allamaprabhu Devara Vachana-Nirvachana, titled Vachanas of Allamaprabhu – Commentary Volumes 1 and 2, will be released on February 28 at 10:30 am in Bengaluru. The ceremony at Sri Shivarathreeshwara Centre, JSS Mahavidyapeetha, Jayanagar, will be held in the presence of His Holiness Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji. Former CM Basavaraj Bommai will preside, and Justice Krishna S. Dixit will release the book. The translation, covering six sthalas in two volumes, took seven years of dedicated effort by a team of scholars.

Inauguration of Jal Manoranjan Park at Almatti on March 1

Vijayapura

The Jal Manoranjan (Water Recreation) Park at Almatti will be inaugurated on March 1 at 11 am in a programme supported by the Water Resources Department and Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited. Deputy Chief Minister and Water Resources Minister D. K. Shivakumar will attend as chief guest, while District In-charge Minister and Industries Minister M. B. Patil will inaugurate the park. Minister for Textiles and Agricultural Marketing Shivanand Patil will preside over the function. Several prominent dignitaries will be present, including Legislative Council Opposition Chief Whip N. Ravikumar, MLA and Special Representative of the Karnataka Government in New Delhi Prakash B. Hukkeri, KSDL Chairman and MLA Appaji C. S. Nadagouda, and Members of Parliament Ramesh Jigajinagi and Sudha Murty. MLAs Hanamant Nirani, Sunilgouda Patil, P. H. Poojar and Keshav Prasad S. will also participate.

Tension Continues in Bagalkot After Shivaji Jayanti Incident; Yatnal Visits City

BAGALKOT

The atmosphere in Bagalkot continues to remain tense following the recent stone-pelting and slipper-throwing incident during the Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti procession in the city.

Amid the prevailing tension, Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal visited Bagalkot on Monday under heavy police security. Tight bandobast arrangements were made across sensitive areas, particularly around Fanka Masjid and Kothalappana Temple. More than 1,000 police personnel, including over a dozen DR units, were deployed to maintain law and order.

IG Chetan Singh Rathod visited the city and inspected the security arrangements. The bandobast was carried out under the leadership of former SP Amarnath Reddy.

Yatnal arrived in Bagalkot at around 12 noon and first visited the Ambabhavani Temple in the Killagalli area of Old Bagalkot, where he offered prayers. He later held an emergency meeting with activists and stated that their work would continue despite recent developments.

IG Chetan Singh Rathod visited the city and inspected the security arrangements. The bandobast was carried out under the leadership of former SP Amarnath Reddy

Subsequently, he visited Basaveshwara Circle and later met activists of Hindu organizations who were injured in the unrest at various private hospitals.

He enquired about their health condition and extended financial assistance to Ashok Barakera (24), one of the injured, by handing over monetary aid.

Yatnal's visit has reportedly boosted the morale of Hindu organization activists, who are now preparing for a protest scheduled to be held in the city on February 26. Elaborate preparations are underway for the proposed demonstration.

Meanwhile, the situation in the city remains sensitive. Hindu organizations have also expressed their intention to celebrate Shivaji Jayanti again in the coming days, though the date for the event is yet to be officially announced. Authorities continue to maintain heightened vigil to prevent any further untoward incidents.

Solapur urged BJP to act against tainted MLAs and called for a judicial probe into alleged corruption

Is B.Y. Vijayendra BJP President or Protector of the Corrupt? Asks AAP District President

VIJAYAPURA

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has strongly criticized the recent stand of Karnataka BJP President B. Y. Vijayendra and other party leaders in connection with cases involving KR Puram MLA Byrathi Basavaraj and Shirahatti MLA Chandru Lamani.

In a press statement, AAP District President Bhogesh Solapur alleged that in both cases the involvement of the accused is prima facie evident. He stated that Byrathi Basavaraj has been remanded to jail following serious observations made by the court in a murder case, while Chandru Lamani was allegedly caught red-handed by the Lokayukta while accepting money.

Solapur questioned why the BJP leadership has not taken immediate disciplinary action against the tainted MLAs. "Instead of securing their resignation or expelling them from the party in cases involving murder and corruption, Vijayendra and other leaders are visiting their residences with supporters and offering consolation. Their attempts to politicize and communalize the issue clearly show that they are acting as protectors of the corrupt," he alleged.

He challenged the BJP's national leadership to intervene immediately, expel the two MLAs from the party, and prove that the party has no connection with the alleged wrongdoing.

Call for Judicial Inquiry into Commission Allegations

Solapur also referred to statements made by the president of the State Contractors' Association, who reportedly alleged that 30 to 40 percent of MLAs across party lines are involved in commission-related dealings, with some directly participating.

He demanded that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah order a judicial inquiry into the allegations if he has moral responsibility. "If the Chief Minister truly believes in ethics, he must take these allegations seriously and initiate a judicial probe to curb the alleged systematic and large-scale corruption in the state," Solapur urged.

The AAP leader said the government must act transparently and remain accountable to the people of the state.

BJP Embracing Corruption, Alleges KPCC Spokesperson S.M. Patil Ganihar.

VIJAYAPURA

KPCC spokesperson S. M. Patil Ganihar alleged that the BJP has consistently shielded leaders accused of corruption, stating that the party has a history of embracing tainted individuals.

Addressing a press conference in Vijayapura, he said that Shirahatti BJP MLA Dr. Chandru Lamani had earlier faced corruption allegations while serving as a government health officer and has now allegedly been caught by the Lokayukta while accepting a bribe as an MLA. "Despite his past record, the BJP gave him a ticket. This shows the party's attitude towards corruption," he alleged.

Patil claimed that several BJP MLAs have previously been caught in Lokayukta raids. He cited the case of former MLA Y. Sampangi, who was allegedly raided at the Legislators' House, and BJP leader Madal Virupakshappa, who was reportedly caught red-handed during his tenure as Chairman of Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited. "The BJP has stood by all of them," he said.

He further alleged that even former Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa had faced corruption charges in the past and that internal party critics had exposed several issues.

'Stone-Pelting Is Wrong, Whoever Does It'

Referring to recent unrest in Bagalkot, Patil said that stone-pelting is wrong irrespective of who is responsible. "Whether Muslims throw stones or members of Sangh Parivar are involved, it is wrong. However, with a by-election in Bagalkot, there is suspicion that such incidents are being politicized for electoral gain," he said.

'BJP Is Party of Corrupt Leaders'

KPCC Medical Cell President Dr. Ravikumar Biradar also addressed the media, alleging that corruption is deeply rooted within the BJP. He claimed that several BJP leaders have faced serious allegations in various cases.

He further remarked that even issues surrounding major national projects reflect poorly on the party's governance, terming it a "party of corrupt leaders."

Dalit Swarajya Sena Demands Property Rights for Slum Dwellers

VIJAYAPURA

Activists of Dalit Swarajya Sena submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding immediate resolution of issues faced by slum residents and the grant of property rights (hakku patra) along with other basic facilities.

The activists stated that more than 38 percent of families in the district are living in slum areas, deprived of even minimum civic amenities. "Their lives have become miserable due to the lack of basic infrastructure and services," said organization president Gowdappa Badiger.

He emphasized that a dignified life and a healthy environment are fundamental rights of every citizen. "We have urged the district administration to safeguard the constitutional right to life and ensure that all entitled benefits and welfare schemes reach slum residents properly," he said, adding that the Deputy Commissioner responded positively and assured that the grievances would be examined.

The organization also submitted a list of demands and requested the convening of a meeting involving officials from concerned departments to address the issues of slum dwellers in a comprehensive manner.

Office-bearers including Amrut, Parashuram, Aditya, Sharanu, Sagar, Taufiq, Kiran, Imran, Channu, Subhash, Paramesh, Anand, Balu, Gopal, Sadu and Arjun were present during the submission of the memorandum.

Adi Jambava Sangha Urges Immediate Implementation of Internal Reservation

VIJAYAPURA

Office-bearers of the Karnataka State Adi Jambava Sangha submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah through the Deputy Commissioner, urging the State Government to implement internal reservation without further delay.

Speaking on the occasion, District President M.R. Doddamani said the Karnataka Government had a golden opportunity to implement internal reservation in a just and scientific manner but failed to ensure social justice for all 101 Scheduled Caste communities. "Vote bank politics has overshadowed social justice. Even 16 months after the Supreme Court verdict, internal reservation has not been properly implemented, leading to widespread dissatisfaction among Scheduled Castes," he alleged.

He pointed out that states like Haryana, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh implemented internal reservation scientifically within six months, whereas Karnataka has been struggling for over 16 months due to what he termed as "self-created confusion."

Doddamani said the Congress government had earlier constituted the Justice Nagamohan Das Commission and allocated Rs 120 crore from Dalit welfare funds to conduct a caste census among Scheduled Castes and submit a report. However, he alleged that the government sidelined the Commission's recommended 1:6:5:4:1 formula and instead introduced a "6:6:5" formula, which he termed unscientific and politically motivated.

He further claimed that allowing non-Madiga communities to obtain caste certificates under Category 1 defeats the very objective of internal reservation. He also expressed concern over the lack of clarity on whether there are 98 or 101 castes currently listed under the Scheduled Caste category in Karnataka.

The Sangha also objected to the exclusion of promotion quotas from the internal reservation framework. "As per government norms, 50 percent of vacancies are filled through direct recruitment and the remaining 50 percent through promotions. However, promotion opportunities have been deliberately excluded from the bill, undermining the spirit of internal reservation," he alleged.

Season's First Rain Lashes Vijayapura; Power Cuts, Traffic Disruptions Reported

VIJAYAPURA

The first rain of the year brought a sudden change in weather conditions across Vijayapura on Sunday, with heavy showers drenching the city for over half an hour.

The downpour, which began unexpectedly, led to power outages in several parts of the city. While residents welcomed the much-needed rain and the relief from rising temperatures, the heavy spell also caused inconvenience in many areas. Two-wheeler riders were seen struggling to navigate waterlogged roads near Meenakshi Circle and Badikaman. Rainwater entered low-lying areas, causing difficulties for commuters and local residents. However, the rain has also sparked concern among farmers. The sudden showers are feared to have caused damage to grape and mango crops, while dried jowar kept for harvest is reportedly at risk of being spoiled.

AGRICULTURE PROMOTION

Research and Market Access Essential to Make Agriculture Profitable: Khandre

BIDAR

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister and District Incharge Minister Eshwar Khandre emphasized that agriculture can become a profitable sector only through sustained discussion, research, better market access and effective implementation of government schemes at the farmers' doorstep. He was speaking after inaugurating the Employment Fair, Millet Fair, Fruit and Flower Exhibition, and Fisheries Fair organized at Nehru Stadium in Bidar on Sunday. The event was jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, Agriculture Department, Horticulture Department and Fisheries Department.

The minister noted that nearly 75 percent of the district's population depends on agriculture due to the limited presence of industries. "Therefore, it is essential to strengthen and promote agriculture," he said.

Highlighting the cropping pattern in the district, he stated that around 10 lakh acres of land are cultivated annually. Of this, nearly 50 percent is under soybean cultivation, 25 percent under red gram (tur), and the remaining 25 percent under other crops. He urged farmers not to depend solely on a single crop and encouraged diversification, particularly towards millets.

"Millets are not just food; they are the foundation of a healthy life," he said. He pointed out that millets require less water, are sustainable crops, and provide assured income even amid climate change challenges. "Millets have the power to protect both health and agriculture. People should incorporate millets into their daily diet," he added. Khandre also advised farmers to focus on value-added products to enhance their income. He said the primary objective of the fair was to ensure that farmers receive awareness about government schemes, access to horticulture products, and fair support prices in the market.

The event witnessed participation from farmers, entrepreneurs and various stakeholders from across the district.

QUICK READ

Vinay Sneha Balaga gifts school uniforms

Mandya

Vinay Sneha Balaga distributed free school uniforms to students at Kalegowda High School in Mandya. M. Vinay Kumar, founder president of the Mankuthimma Trust, said the initiative was part of his 36th birthday celebration, aiming to complete 36 social service activities for a meaningful life. The program saw participation from Nagaratna, Secretary of M.S. Rajendra Prasad Trust, Alliance Mohan Kumar, and teachers Umesh, Mohan, Rathod, and Govindaraju. Students received uniforms with joy, and the event highlighted community support for education. Vinay Kumar encouraged others to engage in social work and support children's learning needs.

Free bus travel for PUC students announced

Gadag

Students appearing for the second PUC examinations from February 28 to March 17 will receive free bus travel across the district. The North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation announced that candidates can use city, suburban, regular, and express buses without paying any fare. By showing their official admit card, they may travel from their homes to assigned examination centres and return after completing each paper. Officials said the step aims to reduce stress on families and ensure students reach centres on time. Authorities urged students to carry valid hall tickets during every journey for smooth and safe travel experience daily.

Ramesh Jarkiholi alleges conspiracy against Dalit MLA

Jarkiholi claimed he spoke against the issue, despite not being from that community, highlighting leader suppression politically

BELAGAVI

Former minister and Ramesh Jarkiholi alleged that a conspiracy has been carried out against MLA Chandru Lamani because he belongs to the Dalit community.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, the Gokak MLA claimed that Lamani, who is educated and active in politics, has been deliberately targeted. He said a person from the same community was allegedly used in the conspiracy, leading to Lamani's imprisonment.

Jarkiholi said he was raising his voice against the issue despite not belonging to the same community. According to him, such incidents show how certain leaders are being suppressed in the political system.

He stated that the oppression of Dalit MLAs has been happening for many years and leaders must speak openly about it. At the same time, he clarified that he was not making any comments about corruption allegations or the investigation process.

The MLA also said questions should be asked about why leaders from specific

communities repeatedly face such situations. He added that similar incidents had happened in the past as well.

During the press conference, Jarkiholi also referred to the internal situation within political parties. He said confusion within the Bharatiya Janata Party should be resolved quickly, otherwise the party could face difficulties in the future. He also commented on discussions within the Indian National Congress, saying internal issues should be addressed there as well.

Jarkiholi said he plans to meet Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah along with other leaders to seek a proper inquiry into the matter. He expressed hope that the government would ensure justice after examining all aspects of the issue.

Mandya district acts to tackle stray dog menace

Dr. Kumar urged appointing nodal officers in urban local bodies for stray dog management, constructing perimeter walls, and running awareness campaigns to prevent dogs entering bus stands or spreading waste

MANDYA

The District Commissioner, Dr. Kumar, has directed strict measures to control the increasing problem of stray dogs in Mandya, following a Supreme Court order. Officials from urban and rural local bodies, along with concerned departments, have been instructed to act immediately.

Speaking at a meeting held at the District Commissioner's office, Dr. Kumar emphasized the appointment of nodal officers in every urban local body to oversee stray dog management. He also urged the construction of perimeter walls around public buildings and called for public awareness campaigns to prevent dogs from entering bus stands or scattering food waste.

Authorities were instructed to neuter all stray dogs, vaccinate them against rabies, and relocate them to suitable shelters. Currently, eight shelters have been constructed, one in each taluk local body, to accommodate the animals. In total, 190 stray dogs have been identified within public premises, including schools, colleges, hospitals, and bus stands, and plans are underway to shift them to these shelters. Officials highlighted that improper disposal of food waste attracts stray dogs, urging citizens to keep dustbins closed and dispose of garbage daily.

The meeting was attended by Narasimha Murthy, Planning Officer of the Urban Development Cell, Shivalingaiah, Deputy Director of the Animal Husbandry Department, Pampashree, Municipal Commissioner, and other district-level officials. The coordinated action aims to safeguard public health and safety while ensuring humane treatment of stray animals.

Unauthorized entry banned in social welfare hostels

GADAG

The Social Welfare Department has prohibited entry of unauthorized persons into its hostels. Only government officials or elected representatives can enter freely. Others may visit for a limited time with written permission from the District Deputy Director or Assistant Director of the concerned taluk. Visitors to girls' hostels must be accompanied by female officers. Community leaders or media representatives seeking to inspect hostels must also obtain written approval and be accompanied by department staff. Any unauthorized entry will be treated as trespassing, with legal action enforced, stated Dr. Nanda Hanabaratti, Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department.

S. Prakash Priyadarshan said the ruler's vision laid modern Mysore's foundation, boosting cultural, educational, and economic growth

Tributes paid to Mysuru ruler Chamarajendra

MYSURU

The birth anniversary of Chamarajendra Wadiyar X, remembered as a visionary ruler of the Mysore kingdom, was observed in the city with floral tributes and service activities for students.

The programme was held in Vidyaranyapuram, where organisers distributed notebooks, dry fruits and fruit jam to residents of the Basavalinga Swamy Education Trust Girls' Hostel. The event aimed to honour the legacy of the former Mysore king while encouraging social service.

Speaking on the occasion, S. Prakash Priyadarshan, a city leader of the Janata Dal (Secular), said the ruler played an important role in laying the foundation for modern Mysore. He noted that the Maharaja's vision helped strengthen cultural, educational and economic growth in the region.

Priyadarshan recalled that the king gave special importance to Kannada and Sanskrit learning. He established one of the earliest Sanskrit colleges and encouraged talented students by honouring them during the famous Dasara Durbar celebrations.

He also highlighted the ruler's contribution to several institutions that later became landmarks, including the Mysore Zoo, the Bangalore Palace, and the glass house at Lalbagh Botanical Garden. According to him, such achievements continue to inspire people today.

Religious speaker Adavi Ravi Swamiji also addressed the gathering. He reminded the audience that while people are born without fame, their actions decide how they are remembered after life.

Several social workers, political leaders, artists and local residents attended the programme and paid their respects to the former Mysore ruler. Organisers said remembering such historical personalities can guide the younger generation toward service and responsibility.

Minister warns firms over farmers land issues

KOPPAL

Karnataka Minister Shivaraj S. Thangadgi directed wind energy companies to carry out their projects without creating problems for farmers and rural communities in the district.

He spoke during a review meeting held at the District Collector's office to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Karnataka Renewable Energy Policy 2022–27. Officials and representatives of wind energy companies attended the meeting.

The minister said several complaints have been received from farmers about damage to their lands and village roads due to heavy vehicles used for transporting wind turbine equipment. Vehicles weighing up to 60 to 70 tonnes are moving through rural roads, causing serious deterioration, he noted.

Thangadgi stressed that companies must respond quickly to the concerns of local residents. He said renewable energy projects are important, but they should not be carried out at the cost of farmers' livelihoods.

The minister instructed officials to collect detailed information about the number of wind turbines approved and those already being installed. He also directed the formation of taluk-level committees involving officials from departments such as revenue, public works, police, forest and electricity supply agencies to monitor the work.

The committees will also review whether damaged roads are being repaired properly using corporate social responsibility funds. Another meeting will be held soon to review complaints received from farmers and the action taken.

During the meeting, Kushtagi MLA Doddanagouda Patil said roads in several villages have been badly damaged, making it difficult even for ambulances to pass. Dust from heavy vehicles has also affected crops.

Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Basavaraj Hitnal said around 5,400 acres may be used for wind energy projects and called for careful planning to protect farmers and local infrastructure.

Multiple Cooperative societies face winding up in Gadag

GADAG

The Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Gadag District, has issued a public notice regarding several cooperative societies in the district that have completely stopped functioning. Many of these societies have not conducted audits for five to ten years, failed to hold elections, and skipped annual general meetings as required under the Karnataka Cooperative Societies Act.

The notice lists societies across Gadag, Shirahatti, Lakshmeshwar, Nargund, Mundargi, and Shigli taluks, including Milk Producers Cooperative Societies, Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Handloom and Textile Producers' Cooperatives, Credit Societies, and Women's Cooperatives.

Officials have noted that management boards and members have shown little interest, adjournment papers are missing, and members' details are unavailable.

The Deputy Registrar has invited proposals for the winding up of these inactive societies. Those associated with the listed societies can submit objections or visit the office of the Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Gadag Sub-Division, located opposite APMC Yard, during office hours within seven days. Failure to respond will result in steps being taken to formally dissolve the societies.

Mandya plans meaningful Jayanti celebrations in March

MANDYA

Preparations are underway in Mandya for the Jayanti celebrations of great personalities, including Sri Renukacharya and Yoginarayana Yatindra, scheduled in March. B.C. Shivananda Murthy emphasized that the celebrations should be conducted in a meaningful and respectful manner.

Speaking at a preparatory meeting held in the District Collector's Office Hall, Murthy highlighted the importance of honoring the contributions of these eminent personalities. He suggested that invitations be sent for the program, the stage be kept clean, and banners displaying portraits of the greats be installed. Community leaders who have made notable achievements should also be respected during the event.

Murthy called for lectures by thinkers and scholars from the community to raise awareness about social and cultural values. Cultural programs and proper stage arrangements, including sound and lighting systems, should be ensured to make the celebrations engaging and dignified.

Officials and community leaders present at the meeting included Assistant Director of the Kannada Culture Department B.V. Nandish, and community representatives Vekatesh, Shadakshari, Channakeshava, M.V. Sparna Kumar, K. Nagananda, H.P. Mohan, K.V. Mohan Kumar, and Keshavamurthy.

The meeting stressed that the Jayanti celebrations are not just ceremonial but an opportunity to inspire the community and honor the legacy of these historical figures. Proper planning and active participation are expected to make the March events memorable and meaningful for all attendees.

Leaders say Shivaji inspires youth generations

KOPPAL

The birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was celebrated with respect and enthusiasm at a programme organised in the city on Monday. The event was jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, the Kannada and Culture Department and the Koppal Municipal Corporation at Sahitya Bhavan. Floral tributes were offered to the portrait of the great Maratha ruler before the programme began.

Koppal MLA K. Raghavendra Hitnal inaugurated the event and said Shivaji Maharaj remains a source of inspiration for the younger generation. He described Shivaji as a brave warrior and a great patriot who achieved remarkable success at a young age. His administrative skills and leadership qualities continue to guide people even today, he said. Referring to the words of B. R. Ambedkar, the MLA said society should move forward through education, organisation and struggle.

Legislative Council member Hemalatha Nayak said Shivaji Maharaj lived an ideal life and fulfilled the dream of Swaraj inspired by his mother Jijabai. She added that his courage and dedication to the nation should inspire people to follow strong values in their lives. Additional Deputy Commissioner Sidrameshwar said Shivaji was not only a warrior but also a capable administrator who respected all religions and communities. His contributions to governance and culture remain significant in Indian history, he noted.

MARIKAMBA FLOWER FERVOR

Grand flower decorations mark Marikamba fair opening

SHIVAMOGGA

The historic fair of Kote Sri Marikamba Temple began on Monday with colourful preparations and deep devotion among thousands of devotees expected to visit the city.

This year too, senior Congress leader and DCC Bank director M. Srikanth has taken the responsibility of decorating the sacred Marikamba gadduge with grand flower arrangements. Like the previous fair, he has offered the decoration as a mark of devotion to the goddess.

A team from Shravan'sh Wedding World has been working day and night for the last three days to complete the elaborate setup. The decoration work is said to cost several lakhs of rupees.

Large quantities of fruits and flowers are being used to create the display. Around six to seven vehicle loads of watermelon, China fruit, sugarcane and mosambi have been brought in along with tons of fresh flowers. Organisers believe the colourful arrangement will add special charm to the famous Marikamba fair.

The annual fair attracts devotees from many places and is known for its vibrant traditions. With preparations in full swing, the entire Gandhi Bazaar area has turned festive.

Authorities have also made traffic changes for the smooth movement of visitors. Vehicles are restricted on and around Kote Road. Parking arrangements have been provided at Science Maidan, Sacred Heart Church grounds and the City Corporation premises.

The celebrations began early Tuesday morning with a traditional puja at 5 am where the goddess was worshipped at her residence in Gandhi Bazaar. Later in the night, a grand procession will bring the goddess to the Marigadduge on Kote Road. Public darshan for devotees will begin from Wednesday morning.

QUICK READ

Women entrepreneurs can now register online

Chikkaballapura

The Karnataka State Women Development Corporation has launched the Gruhalakshmi Digital Marketing App to support women entrepreneurs. Since January 9, women can register for free on gruhalakshmidigital.org by uploading personal details and photos of the products they produce or trade. The platform allows entry of name, address, product details, email ID, and phone number to help expand business reach and increase transactions. The Deputy Director of Women and Child Development Department stated that women can also contact Development Inspectors at the District Administration Building in Chikkaballapura for guidance.

Skill training applications invited for SC/ST entrepreneurs

Chikkaballapura

The Tourism Department invites applications for a one-month skill development training under the SCSP/TSP scheme for 2025-26. The program aims to support small entrepreneurs from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in starting mobile canteens with subsidy assistance. Eight SC and five ST candidates will be selected. Eligible participants must have passed at least 10th class, be aged between 20 and 45, and complete training at state or central government institutions. Applications must be submitted by March 13, 2026. For details on qualifications, documents, or clarifications, candidates can contact the Assistant Director, Tourism Department, Chikkaballapura, at 08156-277041.

JOSHI SLAMS CONGRESS MISSTEPS AT AI SUMMIT

In Bengaluru, Joshi said Congress leaders, including Margaret Alva and Akhilesh Yadav, criticized the party's inappropriate summit behavior

BENGALURU

Union Minister Prahlad Joshi sharply criticised the Congress party on Monday for its conduct at the AI Summit, calling it "shocking and regrettable." He urged Congress leaders to apologise to the nation and act responsibly at international forums.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Joshi said even Congress leaders like Margaret Alva and Akhilesh Yadav had expressed concern over the party's behaviour. He said Congress ignored established protocols and acted inappropriately during the summit attended by 29 countries, 45 ministers, top industry figures, and AI experts.

Joshi also criticised internal conflicts within Karnataka Congress over the Chief Minister and Deputy CM posts, claiming that such power struggles have overshadowed governance and slowed development. He said corruption, unscientific schemes, and internal divisions have harmed the state's progress.

On the issue of a "Dalit CM" narrative, Joshi alleged it is a political tactic, not a sign of real concern for governance. He claimed party leaders prioritise personal interests over public welfare, leaving basic civic issues like water scarcity and poor roads unaddressed, especially in northern Karnataka.

Regarding the Chandru Lamani case, Joshi called for a proper investigation into recently surfaced audio clips, urging clarity on whether the incident was a deliberate trap.

He further lamented that Karnataka's culture of industrial growth and development has weakened under the current government, describing its claims of "development" as largely illusory. Joshi stressed that the state needs focus on governance and public welfare rather than political posturing.

Balakrishna backs Shivakumar amid leadership debate

RAMANAGARA

Balakrishna remarked that Shivakumar's political position could have been different if he compromised with the Bharatiya Janata Party, amid ongoing state leadership discussions

Congress MLA H. C. Balakrishna has strongly supported Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, saying the senior leader has sacrificed much for the party and remained loyal despite many challenges.

Speaking in Magadi, Balakrishna said Shivakumar dedicated his entire political life to the Indian National Congress. He pointed out that Shivakumar even faced jail during political struggles but still stayed committed to the party. Balakrishna remarked that if Shivakumar had compromised with the Bharatiya Janata Party like some leaders, his political position might have been very different today. His comments come at a time when discussions are continuing in political circles about leadership roles in the state.

He said party workers believe Shivakumar deserves an opportunity and appealed to the Congress high command to consider the sentiments of leaders and supporters. According to him, if Shivakumar becomes Chief Minister, it could bring more development to the Ramanagara region. Balakrishna also spoke about reports of senior leader G. Parameshwara meeting Union minister H. D. Kumaraswamy. He said such meetings should not always be given political meaning, as leaders often meet each other at public events, offices or social gatherings.

Meanwhile, minister Satish Jarkiholi recently said that Siddaramaiah will continue as Chief Minister for now, adding that any further decision on leadership will be taken by the party high command.

Balakrishna said party leaders regularly travel to Delhi to meet senior leadership and discuss organisational matters and political developments in the state.

The MP urged rail authorities to expedite overbridge plans at Origaon and Kamasamudra, addressing residents' traffic safety concerns

Push for bridges and railway workshop gains

KOLAR

Member of Parliament M. Mallesh Babu held discussions with railway officials regarding major infrastructure works planned across Kolar district. The meeting took place with Ashutosh Kumar Singh, Divisional Railway Manager of the South Western Railway Bengaluru Division.

During the meeting at the DRM office, several long-pending proposals were reviewed, especially the construction of railway overbridges at busy level crossings in the district. Officials discussed the need for bridges near Kalyani on Tekal Road in Kolar city, near the Sanatorium area on Bangarpet Road, close to SN Resorts in Bangarpet, and near the Deshihalli crossing.

The MP also urged railway authorities to speed up plans for overbridges at Origaon in Kolar Gold Fields and Kamasamudra in Bangarpet taluk. Residents have long demanded safer road connectivity in these areas due to heavy traffic and frequent railway gate closures.

Mallesh Babu also submitted a request regarding a major development project for the region. He handed over a letter asking railway authorities to send a proposal to the Union Mines Ministry to allocate nearly 500 acres of land belonging to Bharat Gold Mines Limited. The land is proposed for establishing a railway service workshop in KGF, which could create jobs and support railway maintenance in the region.

According to the MP, officials responded positively to the proposals during the meeting. He expressed confidence that the pending projects would move forward soon after necessary approvals.

Additional Divisional Railway Manager and other senior railway officials also attended the review meeting and discussed the technical aspects of the works and future development plans.

KDP review meeting scheduled for Mar 2

CHITRADURGA

The quarterly KDP progress review meeting will continue on March 2 at 10:30 am at the Zilla Panchayat Hall in the city. The earlier meeting held on January 19 remained incomplete as several departments could not finish presenting their reports. Officials said the session will now review pending matters and discuss plans for implementing the NREGA scheme in the coming financial year. Planning and Statistics Minister and District Incharge Minister D. Sudhakar will preside over the meeting. Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. S. Akash confirmed the schedule and urged concerned officials to attend without fail.

Ayurveda gains global recognition says MP

CHITRADURGA

Member of Parliament Govinda M. Karajol said that India's traditional Ayurveda system of medicine has now earned strong credibility and recognition across the world.

He was speaking at a two-day free Ayurveda health check-up and treatment camp organised in Challakere town. The camp was jointly arranged by the District AYUSH Department of the Karnataka government, the AYUSH Medical Officers Association district unit, Bapuji Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, and the Narahari Seva Trust at the premises of the Narahari Temple.

Karajol praised the organisers for conducting the programme and spreading awareness about the benefits of Ayurveda among the public. He said such initiatives help people understand traditional Indian systems of health and encourage natural ways of living.

District AYUSH Officer Chandrakant Nagasamudra said the department has been working continuously to bring AYUSH medical services closer to common people. He added that similar health camps are being organised in different parts of the district to help more residents.

Experts at the programme explained that Ayurveda is not only a treatment method but also a science of healthy living. They said the system offers solutions for many lifestyle diseases seen in modern times. By following proper diet, daily routines and balanced habits, people can maintain good health, they added.

Principal C. T. Basavarajappa stressed that health is the most valuable asset in life. He said it is important to share the knowledge of traditional Ayurveda with society.

Religious leader Rajaram Guru blessed the programme. Doctors, professors, trust members and local residents participated in the camp and benefited from the free consultation and treatment services.

Protesters demand internal reservation issue in budget

SHIVAMOGGA

Members of the Internal Reservation Implementation Struggle Committee staged a protest in front of the office of district in-charge minister Madhu Bangarappa, demanding that the issue of internal reservation for Scheduled Castes be taken up in the coming state budget session.

After the protest, the members submitted a petition to the minister's office urging the government to implement internal reservation according to the 6:6:5 formula. Protesters said the Supreme Court of India has already delivered a judgment allowing internal reservation, but the state government has delayed putting it into action.

According to the committee, the proposed classification should provide 6 percent reservation for Madiga-related communities, 5 percent for Holaya-related communities, 4 percent for other touchable communities, and 1 percent for Adi Karnataka, Adi Dravida and Adi Andhra groups. Activists said proper implementation would reduce dissatisfaction among many Scheduled Caste communities. Leaders at the protest also expressed concern that the delay is creating frustration among unemployed youth who depend on reservation benefits for jobs and opportunities. They warned that continued inaction could further increase anger within the community.

The petition also demanded that the government discuss the matter during the March budget session and approve funds based on the proposed ratio. Protesters further urged the formation of separate corporations for 49 Scheduled Caste nomadic communities to support their development.

In addition, they asked the government to withdraw cases filed against activists involved in movements related to promotions, backlog vacancies and internal reservation.

Several activists and community leaders took part in the demonstration and supported the demand for immediate action from the state government.

Chikkaballapur ready for smooth second PUC exams

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu directed officials to make full preparations to conduct the Second PUC Examination-1 smoothly and maintain the sanctity of the examination process.

He spoke during a preparatory meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office on Monday.

A total of 24 examination centres have been set up across the district for the exams scheduled from February 28 to March 17. These include six centres in Chikkaballapur taluk, three in Bagepalli, five in Gouribidanur, three in Shidlaghatta, one in Gudibande and six in Chintamani. Altogether, 12,986 students will appear for the examinations this year.

The Deputy Commissioner said hall tickets have already been issued online to colleges. Chief superintendents of examination centres have been given full responsibility to conduct the exams according to rules without any lapses. Seating arrangements must be clearly displayed on notice boards so students can easily find their places.

Officials were instructed to remain alert against rumours about question paper leaks on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp. Strict action will be taken against those spreading false information. Question papers and answer sheets will be handled under tight security and monitored by responsible officers.

Exams will be conducted under CCTV surveillance with webcasting arrangements. Electronic gadgets such as mobile phones, pen drives, smart watches, Bluetooth devices and earphones are strictly banned inside examination halls for students as well as staff.

Proper lighting, seating, drinking water and toilet facilities must be ensured at all centres. Police support has been arranged, and prohibitory orders will be enforced within 200 metres of examination centres to avoid crowding.

Students have been advised to follow instructions on their admit cards and reach the centres at least thirty minutes before the exam.

BLOOMS AND HERITAGE

Fruit flower expo highlights district heritage

CHITRADURGA

The three-day fruit and flower exhibition held in the city successfully highlighted the rich history, culture and literary heritage of the district, said MLA T. Raghumurthy.

He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the 33rd Fruit and Flower Exhibition organised at the District Horticulture Office premises in V.P. Baroda area of the city. The event attracted farmers, students, women and visitors from different parts of the district.

Raghumurthy said the exhibition was designed not only to display fruits and flowers but also to introduce people to notable personalities and achievements of the region. Special displays presented the life and literary works of noted writer B. L. Venu. Artistic installations and floral designs also depicted historical and cultural themes connected to the district.

Decorative flower structures representing the mathas of Nayakanahatti temple area drew the attention of visitors. Displays also highlighted the courage of Onake Obavva and the environmental message of tree lover Saalumarada Thimmakka.

The MLA said the exhibition also provided farmers with an opportunity to see successful crop varieties and new ideas in horticulture. Seeing the best crops grown by farmers can motivate others to try improved farming methods, he added.

During the programme, Raghumurthy said that a request has been made to the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister for funds related to the Bhadra Upper River Project. Water from the project is expected to help farmers and improve irrigation in the region. He expressed hope that trial release of Bhadra water could take place by the end of March.

Legislative Council member K. S. Naveen said such exhibitions bring joy and peace to people and also spread awareness about agriculture and heritage. Officials, horticulture experts and public representatives attended the closing event.

Chikkaballapur hosts phone-in program for SSLC students

CHIKKABALLAPUR

To help students prepare confidently for the SSLC Annual Examination-1 (2025–26), the School Education Department has organised a special phone-in programme titled "Ask Questions and Solve Problems." The session will be held from 3 pm to 4 pm through Google Meet and will offer expert guidance on exam preparation.

The district has 306 high schools — 111 government, 40 aided, 129 unaided, 22 residential and 4 Maulana institutions — with 15,021 students registered for the SSLC exam. This includes 7,007 students from government schools, 2,616 from aided schools and 5,398 from unaided schools.

Subject experts in six core subjects will interact with students during the programme in the presence of District Collector G. Prabhu and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Y. Naveen Bhat. Students can seek clarity on the syllabus, exam strategy, permitted materials in the examination hall and ways to manage stress, including concerns related to webcasting.

QUICK READ

Entrance exam date announced for Janaseva Admission

Gadag

The entrance examination for admission to Janaseva Vidyakendra for the 2026-27 session has been scheduled on March 8, 2026. The exam is for Class 5 Kannada medium and Class 8 Kannada and English medium students. Scheduled Caste candidates seeking admission to Janaseva Vidyakendra, Channenahalli Sri Ramakrishna Model School, must submit their applications along with required documents to the Social Welfare Department office by March 2 to be eligible for the exam. The Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department urged students to complete the process on time to secure a chance for admission.

Alternative route arranged for Sampige-Mijaru bridge

Mangaluru

Due to reconstruction work on the Sampige-Ashwaththapura-Neerkere-Mijaru bridge in Mangaluru taluk, Dakshina Kannada district, all vehicle movement on this road is banned from February 23, 2026, to February 22, 2028. Vehicles from Neerkere to Sampige should use alternative routes via Manjanakatte-Muchhur-Niddodi on State Highway 70 or via Manjanakatte-Edapadavu-Handel. Vehicles traveling from Sampige to Neerkere must stop at Sampige and use routes through Manjanakatte-Mukhur or Handelu-Edapadavu-Manjanakatte. The City Police Commissioner issued the notification to ensure smooth traffic and safety during the long-term bridge work. Motorists are advised to follow these diversions carefully.

JOURNALISTS URGED TO REFLECT IN CHANGING MEDIA

Prabhakar likened conferences to motor racing pit stops, where journalists refresh ideas and sharpen skills in fast-paced news environments

BIDAR

Media advisor to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, K. V. Prabhakar, called for a serious discussion on the technical and ethical challenges facing journalism while speaking at the 40th Working Journalists' Conference event in Bidar.

He spoke after launching the conference website at the District Journalists' Association building. Prabhakar said the media world is moving very fast and journalists must pause and think about the direction of their work.

According to him, development-oriented reporting is slowly disappearing while statement-based news is becoming more common. This trend, he said, is unhealthy for society. The conference should therefore become a platform where journalists rethink their role and responsibilities.

Prabhakar compared such conferences to "pit stops" in motor racing. Just as racing cars stop to refuel and change tyres, journalists also need time to refresh their ideas and sharpen their skills in a fast-moving news environment.

He pointed out that technology is changing journalism rapidly. Artificial intelligence is already influencing how news is produced and shared. Even before people fully understand current AI tools, newer and more powerful technologies are arriving.

Because of this, he said, journalists must update their skills and learn how to handle risks. Newsrooms should train reporters to identify deepfake content and carefully verify information from social media.

Prabhakar also warned that corporatisation and modern technology are creating fresh ethical questions for the media. The conference, he said, should encourage meaningful discussions on these issues.

He added that the Chief Minister has always supported journalists and expressed hope that the community will receive positive announcements in the upcoming state budget. Leaders and journalist representatives attended the event.

Madiga community demands governor sign reservation bill

MANDYANAGAR

Members of the Madiga community held a protest in Mandyanagar on Monday, urging the state government to implement full internal reservation and requesting the Governor to immediately sign the internal reservation bill. The protest aimed to ensure fair representation for Scheduled Castes as intended by the Constitution.

Protesters began a rally from Sanjaya Circle, raising slogans against the state government and Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa. The demonstrators demanded that internal reservation be properly shared among the Scheduled Castes, with Madigas classified as Category-A for caste certificates.

N.R. Chandrashekhar, State Vice President of the Karnataka Madiga Internal Reservation Struggle Committee, said that internal reservation should apply not only in direct recruitment but also in promotions, backlog positions, KIADB and BDA jobs, and government contracts. He stressed that SCP/TSP grants should be distributed in a 6:6:5 ratio and that political internal reservation should be ensured in upcoming Gram Panchayat, Taluk, and Zilla Panchayat elections.

Chandrashekhar also demanded funds of Rs. 2,000 crore each for the Adijambava Development Corporation, Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Development Corporation, and Safai Karmachari Development Corporations to support social and economic upliftment of Scheduled Castes.

Key leaders present at the protest included CK Papaiah, Bin Kantaraju, B. Krishna, H.M. Puttaraju, former GP President Kumar, Chamanahalli Manju, Balehonniga Kumar, Kannali Kempaiah, Govindaiah, Shambhunahalli Ravikumar, Chikkalingaiah, B.G. Pura Manju, Puttaraju Kadaba, Narasimha Murthy, Ranjith, Chandrasekhar MP, Huliwana Ambuji, Basaralu Srinivasa, Hampapur Shivabora, Prasanna, C.B. Boraiah, Rachaiah, Mallesh, Chandru, Suresh, Umesh, and Shivakumar.

The protest ended peacefully, with leaders calling for immediate action from the Governor and the state government to implement the bill and strengthen internal reservation for the Madiga community across all sectors.

Students learn metal protection at SSIT symposium

MARLUR

A two-day international symposium on metal protection, 'AOUKHASO-2026', concluded at the G.P. Nexus Auditorium of Sri Siddhartha Institute of Technology (SSIT) in Marlur. The event was organized by the Mechanical Engineering Department, OPP India Chapter, and OPP SSIT Student Chapters. The program focused on preventing metal oxidation and creating awareness among students and industry experts.

Chief guest Ravi K. Padmanabhan explained the challenges faced by industries in protecting metals and encouraged students to learn practical methods.

Manohar Rao N, former Executive Director of HPAI and symposium chairman, spoke about the event's objectives and highlighted the opportunities for SSIT students, including industrial visits and first-priority hiring at his organization.

SSIT Principal M. M. Nadakatti addressed the gathering and emphasized the importance of learning corrosion management. He said such symposiums help students understand real-world problems and prepare them for careers in engineering and research.

The event saw about 80 students, including undergraduates, postgraduates, and research scholars from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka districts like Hassan, Udupi, and Tumkur. They presented 31 research papers over six sessions. Each session included guidance from resource persons, keynote speeches, and interactive question-and-answer segments. The best eight papers were honored during the concluding ceremony.

The program was supported by SSIT faculty members including Dr. Jayaprakash.

Ballari Para Swimmer wins historic silver medal

BALLARI

Ballari's para swimmer Gopichand has made history by winning an international silver medal at the World Para Swimming Championship held in Australia from February 16 to 21, 2026. Competing in the 4×100 meter medley relay, he secured second place, marking the first international medal ever for a para swimmer from the district.

Gopichand trained under the guidance of coaches Rajni Lakka and Sharath Gaikwad, whose dedication helped him reach this milestone. His achievement has been widely appreciated by the district administration, including Ballari Rural MLA B. Nagendra, Ballari City MLA Nara Bharat Reddy, Deputy Commissioner Nagendra Prasad K., District Superintendent of Police Dr. Suman D. Pannekar, Zilla Panchayat CEO Mohammed Haris Sumer, and Assistant Director K. Gracy of the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department.

The district congratulated the entire team for this outstanding performance, praising Gopichand's perseverance, skill, and inspiring contribution to para sports in Ballari.

Ballari Bans Liquor Ahead, Invites Franchisees

BALLARI

Ahead of the Sidibandi Rathotsava at Sri Kanaka Durgamma Temple in Ballari city, District Magistrate Nagendra Prasad has ordered a complete ban on the sale, transport, and opening of liquor shops, bars, and restaurants within a one-kilometer radius of the temple. The ban will be in effect on February 24, from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM, aiming to ensure public safety and prevent illegal activities during the festival. The order does not affect stock disposal at KSBCL depots across the state.

In another update, the district administration has invited online applications for the appointment of franchisees for vacant Karnataka One Seva Kendras. Three Kendras in Ballari taluk and one in Kampli taluk are open for franchisees. Interested candidates can apply through the official portal by March 2.

Authorities emphasized public cooperation during the festival and encouraged eligible candidates to seize the franchise opportunity.

Deputy Lokayukta to tour Udupi district soon

UDUPI

Honorable Deputy Lokayukta of Karnataka, Justice B. Veerappa, will visit Udupi district from February 26 to 27. On February 26, he will arrive in the morning and hold hearings at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Auditorium, District Collector's Office Complex, Manipal Rajatadri, from 10 am to 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm to 5 pm, addressing complaints and pending cases in the presence of complainants and respondents. He will stay at the Circuit House overnight. On February 27, hearings continue from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, followed by site visits between 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm, before returning to Bangalore by night train.

Peps opens new sleep store in Vijayapura City

VIJAYAPURA

Peps Industries, a leading Indian mattress and sleep solutions brand, has launched a new Great Sleep Store in Vijayapura at Hanamshetty Complex, Gurukul Road, partnering with Sangam Ventures. The inauguration was attended by Dr. M. B. Patil, Karnataka Industries Minister, former minister Appasaheb Pattanashhetty, Peps MD G. Shankar Ramm, and RBM Ramesh T. The modern store offers spring, memory foam, and coir mattresses, pillows, protectors, and accessories with hands-on experience for customers. The launch marks Peps' 20th-year milestone and strengthens its retail presence in North Karnataka, bringing premium sleep solutions closer to local buyers.

Debt burden, drowning claim lives in Raichur district

RAICHUR

Tragedy struck Raichur district as two separate incidents claimed lives, highlighting the risks faced by farmers and youth in the area.

In Raudakunda village of Sindhanur taluk, 44-year-old farmer Hanumant Virupakshappa Damani ended his life by jumping into a lake. Family members revealed that he was struggling with heavy debts, including around Rs 10 lakh from government banks and another 10-12 lakh from private lenders. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter. A case has been registered at Sindhanur rural police station, and further investigations are underway. Authorities reminded the public that suicide is never a solution and urged those in distress to seek help from helplines like Sneha Foundation (044-24640050) or Tata Institute of Social Sciences iCall (9152987821).

In a separate incident, 22-year-old Parashurama Gundappa Akki from Khairawadagi village, Lingasugur taluk, drowned while swimming with friends in a local lake. He went missing after venturing into the water, prompting a search operation led by Lingasugur Fire Department and local police. His body was recovered on Monday morning and sent for postmortem.

Minister orders no drinking water problems districtwide

KOPPAL

Minister for Backward Classes Welfare, Kannada and Culture Department, and Koppal District In-charge Shivraj S. Thangadgi on Monday urged officials to ensure that residents face no drinking water problems in the district as summer approaches. He made these remarks while reviewing the progress of the Amrutha 2.0 project, Jaljeevan Mission works, and multi-village drinking water projects at the Zilla Panchayat J.H. Patel Hall.

The minister directed Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, Junior Engineers, and Assistant Water Supervisors to visit all areas under their jurisdiction and collect information in advance to identify potential water shortages. "People often call us about water issues. There should not be any water problem in towns or villages across the seven taluks," he said.

He stressed that any taluk expected to face a shortage should immediately report to the Zilla Panchayat CEO through the local MLA. Kushtagi and Yelaburga taluks already receive water from the Krishna River, and current works are sufficient to meet needs. "Once all drinking water projects are completed, the district will have no water issues," he added.

The minister also warned contractors who delay work. "Those not completing work on time should be fined. If necessary, officials should assign work to other contractors who can perform efficiently," he said. Karnataka Legislative Assembly Chief Whip and Kushtagi MLA Doddanagouda Patil, Koppal MP K. Rajashekar Hitnal, Legislative Council member Hemalatha Nayak, District Collector Dr. Suresh B. Itnal, Zilla Panchayat CEO Varnit Negi, Assistant Commissioner Kya. Mahesh Malagitti, Deputy Secretary T. Krishnamurthy, and officials from all taluks, including JEs and contractors, attended the meeting.

The minister concluded by stressing vigilant monitoring and timely completion of all water projects to ensure uninterrupted supply for all residents throughout Koppal district.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SANJANA RAJPAL**, aged about 21 years, D/o Rajesh R Rajpal, No.12, Flat No. 002, Naksha Prime Square, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, Swasti Main Road, Lakshmi Road Cross, Shanti Nagar, P O Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027 .I wish to inform you that my name has been changed from **SANJANA RAJPAL** to **SANJANA RAJESH RAJPAL** and the said names belongs to one & the same person. Affidavit dated 11th January 2026, before Notary Smt. Hemalatha. P

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for information that I, RAMKRIPAL GUPTA S/o MOTI LAL GUPTA, R/o No 1, Trg Bn (AT), ASC Centre (North), Bangalore, Karnataka-560007, declare that the name of mine has been wrongly written as RAMKIRPAL GUPTA in my service records. The actual name of mine is RAMKRIPAL GUPTA, which may be amended accordingly.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GUNDA NEELIMA (old name), a resident of FLAT NO B4 1801, ELITA PROMENADE, J P NAGAR 7TH PHASE, Bengaluru, 560078, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to MANNE NEELIMA CHAUDHARY (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 23-02-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

DOCUMENT LOST

This is to inform to General public that my client Smt.Amreen Naj W/o Syed Ayaj, Residing at Dr// Jakeer Husain Mohalla,Srinivasapura Town and Taluk, Kolar District,, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Sale Deed for taken Digital copy ,have lost following Documents of property pertating to below Mentioned property Situated at Dr// Jakeer Husain Mohalla,Srinivasapura Town and Taluk, Kolar District, had published the factum of lost of her Original Regd Sale Deed, Dated;- 15-06-2012,Executed by Sri, G.Thammireddy s/o Govindraeddy, and T.R.Venkateshareddy s/o Chikkaramayya, in favour of Smt.Jareena Begum W/o Naseemkhan,In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.SVP-1-00609/2012-13, in CD No.SVPD56, In regd before of the SRO Srinivasapura., in respect of Property Bearing V.P.Katha Demand Register no.1548, Property no.21, in Measuring 34 x24 Feets,police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no.2076451/2026, DATED;-23-02-2026, and complaint dated;-23-02-2026, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.
Place;-Chinthamani,
Date;-23-02-2026.

K.S.HARISH KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI.
M;-9980110692

CHANGE OF NAME

I, AYISHA V W/o Y ABDUL RAHIMAN, R/o 1-382, Valavoor Umanagudde House, Thumbe Post And Village, Bantwal, Farangipet, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka-574143, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VALAVOOR ASIYA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, BRAMHANANDA N S S/o N V SHRADHANANDACHAR, R/o 307, k N S Appartments, B H Road, Behind Vijaya Bank, Mutthaiah Layout, Nelamangala, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka-562123, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as N S BRAMHA ARYA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANTOSH KUMAR KARABASAYYA HIREMATH (old name), a resident of NO 68/1, DOOR NO 304, 3RD FLR, 2ND MAIN, 8TH CRS, VENKATAPURA 1ST BLK, KORAMANGALA, Bengaluru, 560034, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR HIREMATH (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 23-02-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDISTIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFCAT DODDABALLAPUR
C.MISC. NO. 1174 /2025
PETITIONERS: 1.SMT.Anjinamma D/o Late munianjinappa, Aged about 42 years, R/at: #93, Sonnappanahalli village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. Vs
RESPONDENT: Registrar of Birth and Death The Tahshildar Doddaballapur Taluk, Doddaballapur.
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
It is hereby notified to the public that the above petitioner, in the Hon'ble Court, his father Sri. Late MUNIANJINAPPA S/o Late ANJINAPPA died on 16-08-2020 Sonnappanahalli village,kasaba Hobli,Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. and since there are no official records of his death, she has filed an application to register the date of death in the Register of Births and Deaths, 1969. Therefore, if the public has any objection, we hereby inform you to appear before the above court on 08.04.2026 at 11 AM. Failing that, the case will be disposed of unilaterally in his absence.
The publication is dated: 23.02.2026 with the signature and seal of the court.
By order of the court
Chief Ministrial Officer, Prl Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura
Advocate for petitioner: **Ambareesha C**, Opp court, Rojipura Doddaballapur.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
CMis.No.408/2025
Petitioner: Sri.Sampathkumar.K.S. S/o Late Siddachar Aged about 37 years, R/at Opp to Siddeshwara Temple, Kithaganahalli, K Palasandra Post, Guluru Hobli, Tumakuru Taluk, Tumakuru District-572118. V/s
Respondent: Registrar of Birth and death The Tahshildar Doddaballapura Taluk. Doddaballapura.
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 Of Registration Of Births And Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the Grandmother of petitioner by name LATE SIDDAMMA W/O LATE SIDDALINGAPPA who died on 08.10.1947 at Kadathippuru Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 24.03.2026
In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte order.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 23.02.2026
By Order of the Court
Chief Ministeral Officer Prl Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura
Advocate: **Venkatachala.B**, Opp to Court complex, Rojipura, Doddaballapur Town.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

QUICK READ

Three killed in MP road mishap

Narsinghpur
Three people were killed and seven others injured after a pick-up truck overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Narsinghpur district on Monday. The accident took place around 11 am near Barman police station on a National Highway stretch. All the victims were daily wage labourers from Surla Khapa village in neighbouring Chhindwara district. They were travelling to Narsinghpur for road construction work. According to Additional SP Sandeep Bhuria, two labourers died on the spot, while the third died during treatment at a hospital.

12 Tamil Nadu fishermen held by Sri Lanka

Chennai
Tension rose in the Palk Strait after the Sri Lankan Navy arrested 12 fishermen from Pamban on Monday and seized their mechanised trawler for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters. Officials of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department said the fishermen had left on Sunday in a boat owned by a Pamban resident near Rameswaram. The vessel was intercepted between Katchatheevu and Mannar. The fishermen were expected back by noon on Monday, but did not return, causing worry among their families.

India-Guyana V-Ps discuss deepening ties

Indian and Guyanese Vice-Presidents met in New Delhi to explore stronger cooperation across multiple sectors

NEW DELHI

Vice-President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan, on Monday held talks with his Guyanese counterpart, Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo, in New Delhi to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral relations. The discussions focused on enhancing cooperation across various sectors, including digital governance, financial inclusion, and education.

Dr. Jagdeo praised India's rapid progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, particularly in implementing the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and other digital initiatives. Both leaders explored possibilities of adapting similar programs for Guyana, while also showing interest in India's e-Migrate platform and the ITEC programme, aimed at technical and educational cooperation.

The two Vice-Presidents also reaffirmed their commitment to amplifying the voice of the Global South at international platforms such as the United Nations Security Council and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Beyond formal talks, they shared a mutual passion for cricket and acknowledged Guyana's contribution to the sport.

Dr. Jagdeo arrived in New Delhi last week to participate in the AI Impact Summit hosted by India from February 16-20. He was welcomed at the airport by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai. The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted that his visit would further strengthen the historic and multifaceted partnership between India and Guyana.

Last month, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali extended warm greetings to India on its 77th Republic Day, emphasizing the shared democratic values and the enduring bonds of friendship between the two nations. President Ali noted that India's freedom struggle inspired the developing world and praised India's continued advocacy for developing nations globally. He described the India-Guyana partnership as strong, historic, and grounded in mutual respect across multiple sectors.

BJP launches 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' ahead of Assam polls

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will begin its 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' in Assam on February 28 as part of a statewide mass outreach campaign ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. The yatra will traverse all Assembly constituencies, aiming to strengthen the party's connection with citizens and highlight developmental and welfare initiatives implemented by the Central and Assam state governments.

According to senior party sources, key leaders participating in different phases of the yatra will include BJP state president Nitin Nabin, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with other prominent central and state leaders. The campaign will feature public meetings, roadshows, and community interactions to showcase achievements in infrastructure, governance reforms, welfare schemes, and economic growth. Party representatives will also seek feedback from the public and communicate future development priorities. BJP leaders believe the Jan Ashirwad Yatra will serve as a key platform to engage directly with citizens, reinforce public trust, and generate momentum ahead of the Assembly polls. The initiative is expected to highlight the party's governance record and strengthen grassroots support across Assam.

PM Modi highlights 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Modi urged citizens to visit 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan, celebrating C. Rajagopalachari's legacy and India's cultural pride while moving beyond colonial-era symbols

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called upon citizens to attend the 'Rajaji Utsav' at Rashtrapati Bhavan, marking the unveiling of a bronze bust of C. Rajagopalachari, which replaced the bust of British architect Edwin Lutyens. The event highlights Rajaji's remarkable contributions as a freedom fighter, scholar, and India's first and only Indian Governor-General.

"Rajaji Utsav is a wonderful initiative, showcasing the diverse contributions of Rajaji to our nation. I urge everyone to visit and get inspired," PM Modi said in a social media message. Earlier, on his radio programme "Mann Ki Baat," he emphasized that the country is moving away from symbols of slavery to celebrate icons rooted in Indian culture.

President Droupadi Murmu, while unveiling the bust, noted that the replacement symbolizes India's broader effort to honor national leaders who shaped the country's history and to move beyond colonial-era legacies. The exhibition, running from February 24 to March 1, 2026, presents Rajaji's life, work, and vision, reflecting his ideals of mental decolonization and pride in India's heritage.

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan highlighted that this move is part of an ongoing transformation across governance, education, law, and culture. He said PM Modi's vision of "Gulami ki Mansikta se Mukti" is being implemented through initiatives like transforming Raj Bhavans into Lok Bhavans, renaming the Central Secretariat as Kartavya Bhavan, installing a statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose near India Gate, and constructing the National War Memorial.

"These steps are more than symbolic; they demonstrate India's commitment to embracing its culture, heritage, and the spirit of Sewa Bhavna," the Vice-President added.

Mamata condemns targeting of Bengali speakers

KOLKATA

A day after International Mother Language Day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed strong concern over what she described as efforts to label Bengali-speaking residents as "ghuspaithiya" (illegal infiltrators). She called these actions both humiliating and unconstitutional, warning against attempts to divide communities on linguistic grounds.

In a statement on X, Banerjee said she was "deeply pained" that certain divisive elements were allegedly maligning Bengali speakers, subjecting them to harassment and persecution. Though she did not name any political party, her comments appeared aimed at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has frequently raised concerns over illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya migration in the state and their inclusion in electoral rolls.

The chief minister asserted that any effort to undermine Bengal's cultural identity or heritage for political gain would be firmly resisted. "Such actions strike at the very heart of constitutional values. We

shall never allow Bengal's culture, heritage or identity to be undermined by intolerance," she said.

Highlighting India's rich linguistic and cultural diversity, Banerjee noted that while Bengalis cherish their mother tongue, they respect other languages spoken in the country. She listed Hindi, Urdu, Nepali, Kurukh, Kurmali, Rajbanshi, Santali, Kamtapuri, and Sadri as part of West Bengal's social fabric.

Reiterating that unity in diversity remains India's greatest strength, Banerjee emphasised her commitment to defending the state's linguistic and cultural ethos against divisive narratives, urging citizens to stand together in preserving Bengal's heritage and inclusive values.

Govt of Karnataka
O/o Executive Engineer, PWD, Udupi Division
Udupi - 576101. C.No : (0820) 2531802
No.PWD:UDN:NIT-50:2025-26:AE-2 Dated: 21.02.2026

Short term Tender Notification

It is here by notified for the information of intending eligible registered contractor in Karnataka PWD, through e-portal "**kppp.karnataka.gov.in**" as per Karnataka tranperency in public procurement act - 2023, as per specified terms & condition notified there in. The Last date for submission of tender on **04.03.2026** through E-procurement portal **"kppp.karnataka.gov.in"** under **5054-80-190-0-01-132** head, work costing **Rs. 19.97 Lakhs to 132.75 Lakhs (excluding GST)** for Retrofitting/ Repair of Bridge works. For more information contact office during office hours.

Sd/-, Executive Engineer,
Public works department
Udupi Division, Udupi.

DIPR/ADU/KSMCA/741/25-26 Dt: 23.02.2026

SRCC GBO Diploma upgraded to master's programme

NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Global Business Operations (PGDGBO) at Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) will be upgraded into a full-fledged Master's degree. The announcement came during Yugantar'26, the annual management conclave of SRCC's GBO programme, held at the Shridhar Shriram Auditorium. The move is aimed at enhancing academic standards, aligning the programme with National Education Policy (NEP) reforms, and incorporating deeper research and innovation components.

Addressing students and faculty, Pradhan urged higher education institutions to "exit the Macaulay doctrine" and realign academic priorities with the vision of Viksit Bharat. He emphasised that NEP represents a structural reset of India's learning ecosystem and called for universities to embrace change amid technological disruption. Pradhan highlighted the need for sovereign AI ecosystems, strengthened indigenous capabilities, and embedding research, patents, and startup incubation into academic structures.

Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh underscored the importance of moving beyond publications to develop patents, prototypes, and commercially viable products, saying, "Innovation, creativity, and originality are the only safeguards for young minds." SRCC Principal Simrit Kaur highlighted the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence, stressing that AI must be guided by human judgment to ensure inclusivity and accountability.

The conclave, themed "AI for Sustainability Startup Innovation," featured corporate panels, founder sessions, and case simulations across disciplines. Pradhan also visited the Viksit Bharat Startup Expo 2026, where students showcased innovative prototypes, linking SRCC's initiatives to India's national roadmap toward 2047.

In a social media post, Pradhan congratulated SRCC on its 100-year legacy and encouraged students to dream big, innovate, and contribute to India's and global prosperity. He also remembered late Shri Arun Jaitley, a distinguished SRCC alumnus and mentor in his life. "I am confident that SRCC students will become global ambassadors of Brand Bharat," he added, reinforcing the transformative potential of the upgraded GBO programme in shaping India's future business leaders.

2 sisters die hours before wedding

JODHPUR

Two sisters in Rajasthan's Jodhpur allegedly died by suicide just hours before their double wedding ceremony on Saturday, police said, while a relative has alleged possible foul play. The deceased have been identified as Shobha (25) and Vimla (23), daughters of Deep Singh, both employed as teachers at a private school. Preliminary reports suggest they may have consumed poison, but officials said the exact cause will be confirmed only after the post-mortem. "It would be premature to ascertain the reason for their deaths at this stage," a police officer said.

The sisters' health reportedly deteriorated in the early hours of Saturday, prompting family members to rush them to a private hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival. Police later took custody of the bodies for post-mortem before handing them back to the family.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer (MPED&Transport),
BCCC, Ground Floor, Annex Building-2, GBA HO Premises, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560002
No.: EE/MPED&Transport/QTN/01/2025-26 Date: 23.02.2026

SHORT TERM QUOTATION NOTIFICATION FOR RATES

The Quotation is invited from the reputed agencies / Suppliers / Distributors / Contractors for the required items (the detailed required items can be viewed in the KPP Portal). The interested supplier / agencies are requested to Submit / Upload their quotation **through KPP-Portal** on or before **03.03.2026 at 5:30 p.m.** The quotation shall be opened on **04.03.2026 at 5:30 p.m.**

Terms and Conditions:
(1) The agency shall quote the rate as per the specification and drawing prescribed. **(2)** The rate quoted shall be inclusive of all materials, labour, fabrication, transportation etc.., excluding GST. **(3)** The quotation are invited for the purpose of budgetary offer for adopting rates in the estimate. **(4)** The agencies do not have any claim for entrustment of work. **(5)** Any other information shall be had from the office of the under signed during office hours or **Contact No. 9845134433. (6)** BCCC reserves right to accept or reject the quotation part or all without assigning any reasons.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
MPED & Transport, BCCC

JHARKHAND MUNICIPAL VOTING ENDS AMID CLASHES

RANCHI

Voting for mayor-chairperson and ward councillor elections in 48 municipal bodies across Jharkhand concluded at 5 p.m. on Monday, amid reports of clashes, disruptions, and allegations of bogus voting. The State Election Commission has yet to release final turnout figures, but preliminary estimates suggest voter participation ranged between 45 and 60 per cent.

Polling began at 7 a.m. for nine municipal corporations – Ranchi, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Adityapur, Chas, Medininagar, Hazaribagh, Giridih, and Mango – along with 20 municipal councils and 19 nagar panchayats. A total of 4,304 polling stations were set up, with long queues observed at several booths throughout the day. Prominent leaders, including Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Defence Minister of State Sanjay Seth, and MP Mahua Maji, were seen standing in queues to cast their votes in Ranchi.

However, voting was disrupted in several areas. In Bokaro's Chas, DSP Praveen Singh was injured during clashes between police and candidate supporters. In Bhojpur Colony, three women were detained for fraudulent voting, causing brief tension. In Dhanbad's Ward 27, a scuffle broke out between rival supporters, while Ward 22 saw an attempted booth looting and assault on a candidate's family member. Giridih's Ward 18 witnessed a road blockade over disputes, and unrest was also reported in Ambedkar Nagar (Gumla), Jugsalai (Jamshedpur), Hindpiri (Ranchi), and Sahibganj, where a Home Guard jawan's accidental rifle discharge triggered panic.

Voters raised complaints about being assigned different polling booths from family members and delayed notifications about booth changes.

ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinia, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

APPENDIX IV **POSSESSION NOTICE** (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

The undersigned being the authorized officer of Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd., (ACHFL), Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"). Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has taken symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersize of powers conferred upon him under Sub-section(4)of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to prevision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ACHFL for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) Loan A/c No.
1. Shashikumar N (Borrower) **2. Nagraj N** (Co-Borrower) **3. Venkatamma** (Co-Borrower) **Lan No: 1312020100022**
Description of Secured Asset
All that piece and parcel of property bearing V. P. Katha No. 139, E-Katha No. 151900200100420043, Situated at Nathabele Village, Budikote Hobli, Bangarpete Taluk, Kolar District, presently comes under Alambadi, Jyothenahalli Village Panchayath, Measuring East to West 10.66800000000001 Meters or 35 feet and North to South 9.7536 Meters or 32 Feet in all measuring 104.05 Square Meters along with a Building constructed thereon and **Bounded on: East:** House belongs to Satish, **West:** Property belongs to Srinivas, **South:** Property belongs to Rajappa, **North:** Road.
Date of Demand Notice and Amount
09.07.2025 / Rs. 8,88,200/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Only)
NPA Date - 29.06.2025 / **Date of Possession : 20.02.2026**

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS/ CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction/tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6,8 & 9 of Security (interest) Enforcement Rules,2002.

Place : Kolar, Karnataka
Date : 24.02.2026

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Reg. Office: 30/1, 1st & 2nd Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Millers Tank Bund Area, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru- 560051

No. DGM-3/BSWML/PR/787/2025-26 Date: 23.02.2026

Notification for Inviting Expression of Interest (EOI)

Under the DAY-NULM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission) scheme, as part of Component 2.0, applications are invited from eligible Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for the selection of 5 SHGs under the IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities related to sanitation, solid waste management, and awareness creation.Interested SHGs registered under DAY-NULM and actively involved in sanitation-related activities should submit their applications online through the BBMP website: **www.bswml.karnataka.gov.in** by **5:00 PM on 02.03.2026.** Applications should be submitted to the following address: #30/1, 3rd Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Millers Tank Bund Area, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru – 560051. Details such as the Terms of Reference (TOR), Template for submission of TOR, and Endorsement Form are available on the BBMP website: **www.bswml.karnataka.gov.in**

The SHGs are expected to: 1) Identity proof, 2) Address proof, 3) Documents proving registration in the eligibility list, 4) Educational qualification & 5) Support the DAY-NULM team in their related activities. All interested SHGs are requested to read the instructions carefully and submit the required documents within the specified deadline.

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.	ವಿವರ	ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಹತೆ
1.	ಸಮುದಾಯ ಸಂಚಾಲಕರು (Community Mobilizer)	(1) ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಎಲ್.ಸಿ. / 10ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತೀರ್ಣರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷಾ ಜ್ಞಾನದ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಕೆಲಸ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುವವರಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ. (2) ಬೃಹತ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ Day-NULM ಶಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಾಯಿತ ಸ್ವ–ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಸದಸ್ಯರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು (SHG) (3) ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರು MS Office ಮತ್ತು MS Excel ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ಸಾಕ್ಷರತೆಯನ್ನು ಕನ್ನಡ ಅಥವಾ ಆಂಗ್ಲ ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು. (4) ಐ.ಇ.ಸಿ. ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಭವವಿರುವ ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿನ ನಗರ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಅಥವಾ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್‌ಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಂವಹನ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ಅನುಭವ ಇರುವವರಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು. (5) ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಾರ್ಡ್ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸವಿರುವ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

DIPR/CP/5833/SSC/2025-26

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-3, BSWML.

QUICK READ

Tamil Nadu releases final voter list

Chennai

The Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, Archana Patnaik, on Monday released the final voter list after completing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. The state now has 5.67 crore voters, down from 6.41 crore earlier. Over 74 lakh names were removed under various categories. At the same time, 7.40 lakh new voters aged 18–19 were added. The revision was carried out from October 27, 2025, to February 23, 2026, as directed by the Election Commission of India.

Bihar IG arrested in custody case

Patna

An Inspector General (IG)-rank officer of Bihar Police was arrested on Monday by Andhra Pradesh Police in connection with an alleged custodial torture case from 2021. Sunil Kumar Naik, a 2005-batch IPS officer currently serving as IG, Fire and Homeguards, was taken into custody from his official residence in Patna. The case relates to an incident in Guntur district when Naik was posted as DIG (CID). The complaint was filed by senior TDP leader K. Raghu Rama Krishna Raju, who is now Deputy Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly.

Shirtless stir: Delhi cops arrest 5th accused

Gwalior

The Delhi police have arrested Jitendra Yadav from Gwalior in connection with the Youth Congress protest at Bharat Mandapam, on Monday. This marks the fifth arrest in the ongoing investigation into the demonstration held during the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Prior to Yadav's arrest, four other leaders — Krishna Hari, Kundan Yadav, Ajay Kumar and Narasimha Yadav — were apprehended and remanded to five days of police custody by the Patiala House Court. According to Delhi Police, the officials have recovered T-shirts and posters that were used in the Indian Youth Congress's protest at the AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam from Indian Youth Congress leader Krishna Hari's car.

India-France overhaul double tax pact to cut ambiguity

The move aims to improve tax clarity and encourage more cross-border co-op

NEW DELHI

India and France have signed an amending protocol to update their Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), aligning it with global standards and strengthening economic ties. The agreement was signed during the recent visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India, the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

Under the new protocol, capital gains from the sale of shares will now be taxed in the country where the company is based. The agreement also removes the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause from the earlier tax treaty, resolving long-pending issues linked to it.

The protocol changes the tax on dividends. Instead of a single 10 per cent rate, a new split system has been introduced — 5 per cent tax for investors holding at least 10 per cent of a company's capital and 15 per cent for others.

It also updates the definition of 'Fees for Technical Services' in line with the India-US tax treaty and expands the scope of 'Permanent Establishment' by including Service Permanent Establishment.

The agreement strengthens rules on exchange of information and adds a new provision on assistance in tax collection, following international standards. It also includes relevant provisions of the BEPS Multilateral Instrument already adopted by both countries.

The government said the changes will provide greater tax certainty, promote investment, technology sharing, and movement of skilled professionals, further deepening economic cooperation between India and France.

MEA hosts UN envoys to boost global ties

The European Legal Gateway Office is not just a facilitation for entry into Europe; it is a bridge between our societies, says Jaishankar

KEY POINTS
- Hosted UN envoys from 7 nations
- Met Brazilian President Lula da Silva
- Inaugurated European Legal Gateway Office
- Emphasized reformed multilateralism

NEW DELHI

Jaishankar stressed reformed multilateralism, stronger global cooperation, and deeper partnerships with key countries during high-level diplomatic meetings in the national capital.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar hosted the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations from seven countries in New Delhi. The envoys represented the Democratic Republic of Congo, Greece, Guyana, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said it was a pleasure to host the diplomats and underlined that reformed multilateralism is more important than ever. He added that discussions were held on technology and development, highlighting the need for stronger global cooperation. Earlier, Jaishankar met Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is on a State Visit to India. He appreciated Lula's guidance in strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries and expressed confidence that the President's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi would give fresh momentum to bilateral ties.

Last week, Jaishankar also spoke at the inauguration of the first European Legal Gateway Office in India. He said the office would not only help professionals explore opportunities in Europe but also act as a bridge between societies.

Highlighting global economic changes, he said countries must manage talent movement with legality, transparency, and fairness. He noted that shifting supply chains, rapid technological change, and demographic differences are reshaping the global workforce.

Jaishankar said initiatives like the European Legal Gateway Office reflect trust and shared commitment to building a skilled, mobile, and resilient global workforce.

Stalin seeks diplomatic steps to free fishermen

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin on Monday asked External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to take immediate diplomatic steps to secure the release of 12 fishermen detained by the Sri Lankan Navy. He also sought action to free 104 other fishermen and 259 fishing boats from the state that remain in Sri Lankan custody.

In a letter, Stalin referred to the latest incident in which a mechanised boat from Rameswaram, carrying 12 fishermen, was caught by the Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday night. The fishermen had left from the Pamban Fish Landing Centre in Ramanathapuram district.

He said that with this incident, a total of 116 Tamil Nadu fishermen are now in Sri Lankan custody. Stalin described the repeated arrests as a serious concern, stating that coastal families are living in fear and uncertainty as their livelihood depends on fishing.

The Chief Minister urged the Union Government to take up the matter through proper diplomatic channels to prevent further arrests and ensure the early release of all detained fishermen and their boats.

The latest detention took place in the Gulf of Mannar between Dhanushkodi and Thalaimannar. The incident led to tension in Pamban, where many boats had gone out to sea. The issue of frequent arrests has remained a long-standing concern between India and Sri Lanka, especially for fishing communities in Tamil Nadu.

Guj teacher duped in 'digital arrest' scam

GANDHINAGAR

A 65-year-old retired school teacher from Gandhinagar was allegedly cheated of Rs 99 lakh after being kept under a month-long "digital arrest" by cyber fraudsters posing as central agency officials. According to police, the woman from Sector 8 received a call on January 16 claiming that a SIM card issued in her name was being used for illegal activities. She was later contacted through a video call by a man who identified himself as an officer of the Central Bureau of Investigation and warned her of arrest in a money laundering case.

The fraudsters also pretended to be officials from the Department of Telecommunications.

7 militants killed in Kishtwar operation

JAMMU

The Indian Army on Monday confirmed that seven heavily armed militants were killed after a year-long high-altitude operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district.

The White Knight Corps, operating from its Nagrota headquarters, described the 326-day mission in the Chatroo region as one of the longest and toughest counter-terror operations in the area. The operation was carried out jointly with the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force.

According to the Army, forces faced extreme cold, heavy snowfall and difficult mountainous terrain. Troops used strong intelligence inputs and advanced technology such as drones, satellite images, unmanned aerial vehicles and secure communication systems to track the militants.

The militants were linked to the Pakistan-based group Jaish-e-Mohammad. The group was led by commander Saifullah, who was killed along with his associates.

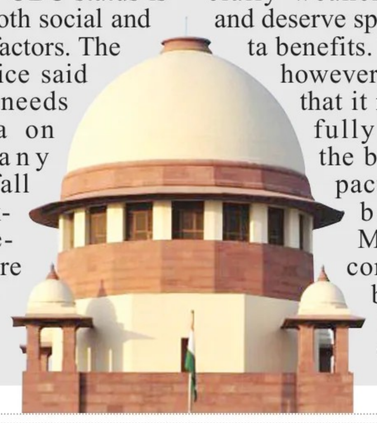
SC QUESTIONS PLEA SEEKING PASMANDA QUOTA

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought detailed data while hearing a PIL seeking a separate quota for Pasmanda Muslims under the OBC category.

A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked the petitioner to explain how Pasmanda Muslims alone could be identified for a 10 per cent reservation. The plea, filed by Mohd Waseem Saifi, seeks sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) based on the Ranganath Misra Commission report.

The court questioned whether Pasmandas are the only backward group among Muslims. "What about other Muslim OBCs?" the bench asked, noting that OBC status is based on both social and economic factors. The Chief Justice said the court needs clear data on how many Muslims fall under backward categories before considering such a demand.



Senior advocate Anjana Prakash, appearing for the petitioner, said she would submit a detailed note answering the court's queries. The bench then adjourned the matter for four weeks. Prakash also requested that the case be tagged with another pending matter related to 4 per cent reservation for Muslims in Andhra Pradesh under the socially and educationally backward classes category. That issue is currently being examined by a Constitution Bench, which is hearing the state government's appeal against a 2005 Andhra Pradesh High Court judgment striking down the law granting reservation to Muslims.

The petitioner argued that Pasmanda Muslims are economically and socially weaker sections and deserve specific quota benefits. The court, however, indicated that it must carefully examine the broader impact on other backward Muslim communities before taking a decision.

Kerala needs 'right' government: Rijiju

KOCHI

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said Kerala lacks the "right government" to take the state towards greater prosperity.

Speaking after inaugurating the NDA office in Kochi ahead of the Assembly elections, Rijiju said the state needs a government that can effectively implement the initiatives of the Narendra Modi-led Centre. He claimed that only a limited number of central schemes are reaching Kerala due to the absence of a supportive state government.

Rijiju said Kerala has long been ruled alternately by the LDF and the UDF, and people are now looking for a change. He expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) can offer a strong alternative and fulfil the aspirations of the people. Calling the office inauguration a "good beginning," he said better and brighter days are ahead for Kerala. BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar and other NDA leaders were present at the event.

SC DEFERS HEARING ON WANGCHUK DETENTION PLEA

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday postponed the hearing on a plea challenging the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk under the National Security Act (NSA) to February 26.

The plea was filed by his wife, Gitanjali J. Angmo. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P. B. Varale adjourned the matter as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta was not available to argue the case.

Earlier, the court had asked the Centre whether it could reconsider Wangchuk's detention, especially in view of his health condition. The Centre and the Ladakh administration have defended the action, saying Wangchuk was detained for allegedly instigating people in a sensitive border area.

The government told the court that violence broke out in Leh on September 24 last year, leading to four deaths and injuries to 161 people. It claimed Wangchuk had tried to provoke protests and even referred to movements similar to the Arab Spring.

The National Security Act allows the Centre or state governments to detain a person for up to 12 months to prevent actions considered harmful to national security. The government said all legal procedures were followed while ordering his detention.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Angmo, argued that the police relied on selective videos and "borrowed material" to justify the detention. Angmo has called the action illegal and a violation of Wangchuk's fundamental rights. Wangchuk, currently lodged in Jodhpur Central Jail, has denied all allegations. He said he never called for violence and had instead condemned the clashes in Leh, describing the day as the "saddest" of his life.

AKHILESH SLAMS CENTRE, FLAGS VOTER CONCERNS

CHANDIGARH

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday criticised the Centre over a recent Youth Congress protest and alleged voter roll manipulation, while reaffirming unity within the INDIA opposition alliance.

Speaking to reporters in Chandigarh, Yadav said the government failed to anticipate the protest and blamed intelligence and law enforcement agencies for lapses. "What happened should not have happened. It is the Government of India's mistake," he said.

He stressed that the INDIA alliance remains united and focused on defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party in upcoming elections, especially in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Yadav said the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls would play a key role in shaping national politics ahead of the 2029 general elections.

Raising concerns about voter lists in Uttar Pradesh, he alleged that migrant workers' names were being removed through misuse of Form 7 applications. He claimed to have found fake signatures that led to the deletion of a Muslim voter's name and urged opposition parties to stay alert.

Yadav also praised Chandigarh's planned development, calling it a model city. He said if similar planning had been adopted in cities like Delhi, problems such as pollution, traffic congestion, and poor drainage could have been avoided.

In an indirect remark aimed at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Yadav said that while local civic issues remain unresolved, some leaders are focused on foreign visits instead of addressing ground realities.

RELIEF FOR DISASTER-STRUCK

Wayanad rehab township opening moved to March 1

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The inauguration of the first phase of houses at the Wayanad rehabilitation township has been postponed to March 1 from the earlier date of February 25.

The Chief Minister's Office informed departments about the change in schedule. However, no official reason has been given for postponing the function. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was earlier scheduled to inaugurate the township and distribute title deeds at Elstone Estate in Kalpetta.

The rescheduling has reportedly affected the travel plans of Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi, who had planned to attend the event. Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is expected to reach Kerala on February 25 to hold discussions with Congress leaders on preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections.

The township has been developed to rehabilitate survivors of the Mundakkai–Chooralmala disaster that struck Wayanad on July 30, 2024. The tragedy, caused by landslides and flash floods after heavy monsoon rains, killed over 200 people, left 32 missing, and destroyed several villages.

The government plans to build 410 houses under the project. In the first phase, 178 houses have been completed for families who lost their homes. Each single-storey house, built to suit Wayanad's terrain and climate, covers around 1,000 square feet and includes multiple rooms, a kitchen, storage space, and a reinforced foundation for a future additional floor.

Once completed, the township will provide shelter to more than 1,600 affected people. The project also includes roads, a health centre, an anganwadi, a market, and community facilities to support long-term rehabilitation.

QUICK READ

6.1 magnitude quake hits Bering Sea

Bering Sea

An earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale struck the Bering Sea on Monday, according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS). The quake occurred at a depth of 45 km at 10:41:52 IST. The central Bering Sea usually sees very little seismic activity. However, its northern part lies along a seismic zone stretching from western Alaska to eastern Russia. The southern boundary is marked by the Aleutian Arc, known for frequent earthquakes due to ongoing tectonic activity.

Indefinite curfew imposed in Birgunj

Parsa

Authorities have imposed an indefinite curfew in parts of Birgunj Metropolitan City in Nepal's Parsa district after clashes between two youth groups on Sunday evening. The order came into effect at 9:45 am on February 23, 2026. The curfew has been enforced under Section 6(a) of the Local Administration Act, 2028. Residents are barred from moving outside, holding gatherings, rallies, protests, meetings, or demonstrations in the affected areas. The restrictions cover Bypass Road in the east, Sirsia River in the west, Gandak Chowk in the north, and Shankaracharya Gate in the south.

Pak spends $980 million on pulse imports

Faisalabad

Agriculture experts have raised concern over the steady fall in Pakistan's pulse production, saying the country now spends about $980 million each year on imports to meet local demand. Rana Muhammad Tayyib, President of the Punjab Pulses Importers Association, said Pakistan was once a leading pulse exporter before 1998. An export ban during the Musharraf era reduced farmers' interest in growing pulses. He said annual demand stands at 1.62 million tons, with around 1.07 million tons imported. Climate change and lack of improved seed varieties have further hurt domestic production.

Iran-US nuke talks set to resume in Geneva on Feb 26

The US will hold a third round of nuclear talks with Iran in Geneva, amid concerns over the risk of conflict between the long-time adversaries

TEHRAN

The US and Iran are set to resume talks Thursday in Geneva, Omani mediators said, extending the search for a diplomatic solution to the latest standoff over Tehran's nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said he expects to meet US special envoy Steve Witkoff for the talks and reiterated that Iran won't be pressured by a US military buildup in the region.

"I believe that still, there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution which is based on a win-win game and a solution is at our reach," Araghchi said Sunday on CBS' Face the Nation.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said on X that the US-Iran negotiations "are now set for Geneva this Thursday, with a positive push to go the extra mile towards finalizing the deal." After talks last week, a US official said Iran was expected to return with proposals in two weeks to bridge remaining gaps.

The US has orchestrated a massive military buildup in the Middle East including two aircraft carriers as President Donald Trump presses Tehran for a new nuclear deal. Trump said on Friday he's considering limited strikes on Iran, risking another destabilizing conflict.

Araghchi reiterated on Sunday that Iran is working on a proposal for an agreement that meets the needs of both parties. "I believe that when we meet, probably this Thursday, in Geneva again, we can work on those elements and prepare a good text and come to a fast deal. This is my understanding. I see it quite possible," he said.

Putin has started WW3 and must be stopped: Zelenskyy

KYIV

Nearly four years after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin "has already started" World War III.

In posts on X summarising his interview with the BBC, Zelenskyy said opinions differ on whether the conflict amounts to a third world war. However, he believes the process has already begun. According to him, Ukraine is standing on the frontline to stop the war from spreading further across the world.

He said the key question is not just about preventing Russia from winning, but about stopping Moscow from reshaping the global order and forcing its way of life on others. Zelenskyy added that Ukraine is acting as an "outpost" to block a wider global conflict.

His remarks came just before the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022. Zelenskyy also highlighted Ukraine's urgent need for stronger air defence systems. He expressed disappointment that international partners have not granted licences for Ukraine to produce advanced systems like the US-made Patriot missiles or manufacture missiles locally.

He stressed that closing Ukraine's skies is crucial to protect civilians, keep schools and businesses running, and support the economy. According to him, stronger air defence would directly help Ukraine's military efforts in the ongoing war.

Ukraine's President says Russia's invasion has already triggered World War III and urges stronger global support to protect Ukrainian skies and stop the conflict from spreading further.

North Korea's Kim re-elected as Workers' Party chief

PYONGYANG

The Congress has decided to reappoint Kim as party chief, citing the "unshakeable" support of party members, citizens and the military, as per agencies.

The decision was taken on Sunday, the fourth day of the multi-day meeting, which sets major policy goals for the next five years.

State media praised Kim for strengthening the country's nuclear deterrence and building armed forces capable of responding to any threat. It said North Korea's nuclear-based defence system has been significantly improved despite international sanctions and other challenges.

Party secretary Ri Il-hwan said only Kim could lead the country's development and guide it towards prosperity. He added that North Korea has become a strong and recognised power despite pressure from outside forces.

The congress also adopted revised party rules, though no details were shared. New members were elected to the party's central committee, while some senior officials were absent from the list, suggesting possible leadership changes.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said the meeting focused mainly on strengthening Kim's leadership and gave limited attention to foreign policy issues.

The Ninth Party Congress, which began last week, is North Korea's highest decision-making body and the first since 2021. New economic, defence and diplomatic policies are expected to be announced soon.

BNM report flags rights crisis in Baloch

QUETTA

The human rights wing of the Baloch National Movement (BNM), Paank, has released its January 2026 report, claiming that serious human rights violations continue in Balochistan.

According to the report, 82 cases of enforced disappearances were recorded during the month. Out of these, 44 people were later released, reportedly after facing physical and mental torture. Paank also documented 12 cases of alleged extrajudicial killings in the same period.

The group said most incidents took place in Kech district, which recorded 26 cases. Shaal reported 16 cases, while Gwadar had 15. Other affected districts included Kharan, Panjgur, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Dera Bugti and Nushki. Two cases were also reported in Karachi. Paank alleged that many people were picked up during home raids without warrants and were held at unknown locations.

The organisation said such incidents have created fear and uncertainty in the region and claimed that enforced disappearances have become common practice. It called for independent investigations and strict action against those responsible.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said after a recent visit that enforced disappearances are increasing public anger and political instability in the province.

Pakistani authorities have repeatedly denied involvement in such cases, calling the allegations politically motivated.

Yogi holds talks with Singapore leaders

SINGAPORE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held discussions with Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan on Monday during his official visit to the country. The talks focused on strengthening cooperation between Uttar Pradesh and Singapore under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

According to Yogi, the discussions covered investment opportunities, infrastructure collaboration, skill development and partnerships in the digital economy. He reaffirmed India's commitment to deepening ties with Singapore under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Earlier in the day, Yogi met Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. Their talks also centred on boosting investment, infrastructure projects, skill development and digital initiatives between Uttar Pradesh and Singapore.

The Chief Minister also met business leaders in Singapore. He held discussions with Sumit Nanda, Chairman and Managing Director of Golden State Capital Pte. Ltd., regarding investment prospects in infrastructure, emerging technologies and data centre projects in Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi also witnessed the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Universal Success Enterprises Limited (USEL). The agreements relate to group housing, a logistics park and a hyperscale data centre park in Uttar Pradesh. These projects are expected to generate employment and strengthen the state's infrastructure.

Yogi Adityanath is on an official visit to Singapore from February 22 to 24 as part of his broader tour of Singapore and Japan.

Indian Embassy issues advisory in Mexico

MEXICO CITY

The Indian Embassy in Mexico has asked Indian nationals to remain indoors and stay cautious after violence erupted following the killing of a senior drug cartel leader.

Mexican authorities confirmed that security forces killed Nemesio Oseguera, one of the most wanted drug traffickers in Mexico and the United States. After the operation, reports of armed clashes, roadblocks and flight disruptions emerged from several areas.

In an advisory issued on Monday, the Embassy urged Indians living in Jalisco State — including Puerto Vallarta, Chapala and Guadalajara — along with those in Tamaulipas (including Reynosa), and parts of Michoacan, Guerrero and Nuevo Leon, to move to safe locations immediately.

Nationals have been advised to avoid areas where law enforcement operations are underway, stay away from large gatherings and restrict unnecessary travel. The Embassy also recommended closely following local news and strictly obeying directions issued by local authorities.

In emergencies, citizens should dial 911. The Embassy further encouraged Indian nationals to regularly update family and friends about their safety through phone calls, messages or social media.

A dedicated helpline number, +52 55 4847 7539, has been shared for assistance.

Canada issues travel advisory for Mexico

TORONTO: Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand has said the safety of Canadians abroad remains the government's top priority, as Ottawa issued a travel advisory for parts of Mexico following violence in Jalisco State. In a post on X, Anand said Canada is closely monitoring the serious and fast-changing security situation in and around Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta. She expressed concern over reports of armed clashes, roadblocks and vehicles being set on fire after a major security operation.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	6	9		8	2		3	
5			6		7	8		9
	2			9			4	
9		6	7		4	2		3
	3	2		5	8		6	1
1			2			9		
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6			3			5		
	9	5		4	6		7	2

8	3	6	2	5	7	9	4	1
2	1	9	3	6	4	8	7	5
5	4	7	1	9	8	2	6	3
4	7	5	6	8	1	3	2	9
9	6	2	5	7	3	4	1	8
3	8	1	4	2	9	6	5	7
6	2	8	9	1	5	7	3	4
1	9	3	7	4	6	5	8	2
7	5	4	8	3	2	1	9	6

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

Dalai Lama attends long life prayer

DHARAMSALA

The 14th Dalai Lama attended a special Long Life Prayer ceremony at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala on Monday. The prayer was organised by former Tibetan political prisoners and members of the Lhasa Boys Association from across the world.

The 14th Dalai Lama, who is 90 years old and will turn 91 in July 2026, received prayers and blessings from participants who travelled from at least 17 countries, including Australia.

One participant said the ceremony was very important as it was organised mainly by former political prisoners and their families. She said it was a rare opportunity to offer prayers directly in the presence of the spiritual leader, and everyone felt excited.

US-CHINA TRADE

China urges US to drop unilateral tariff hikes

BEIJING

China on Monday urged the United States to cancel all unilateral tariffs after the US Supreme Court struck down most of former President Donald Trump's sweeping trade measures.

According to source, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said Beijing has always opposed unilateral tariff hikes. The spokesperson stressed that there are no winners in a trade war and that protectionism does not benefit any country.

The comments came after the US Supreme Court ruled 6-3 against Trump's use of the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose wide-ranging tariffs on imports from many US trading partners. Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, said the law does not give the President authority to levy tariffs, as it contains no clear reference to such powers.

China's commerce ministry said the US measures, including reciprocal and fentanyl-related tariffs, violated international trade rules and even US domestic law. It added that such actions fail to serve the interests of any party.

The spokesperson called for stronger cooperation between the two countries, saying past experience shows that cooperation benefits both sides while confrontation harms both.

Beijing also warned that it would closely monitor any alternative steps by Washington, such as new trade investigations, and would firmly protect its own rights and interests.

Meanwhile, Trump announced plans to raise the existing 10 per cent global tariff to 15 per cent within legal limits. A White House official also confirmed that Trump is scheduled to visit China from March 31 to April 2.

FC Barcelona Pounces on Madrid Slip to Reclaim La Liga Summit

Catalans respond emphatically to rivals' defeat with commanding home victory

MADRID

FC Barcelona capitalised on Real Madrid's surprise stumble to return to the top of La Liga with a convincing 3-0 win over Levante UD.

Goals from Marc Bernal, Frenkie de Jong and Fermín López ensured Barcelona ended a two-game losing streak and moved one point clear of Madrid, who were beaten 2-1 by Osasuna on Saturday after an eight-match winning run.

Eighteen-year-old Bernal set the tone early at Camp Nou, finishing from close range just four minutes into the contest to settle any nerves following recent defeats to Girona in the league and Atlético Madrid in the Copa del Rey. The youngster's strike injected confidence into Hansi Flick's side, which had struggled defensively in recent weeks.

Barcelona doubled their advantage in the 32nd minute when De Jong calmly converted from inside the box after a flowing move. López then sealed the result with a spectacular long-range effort in the 81st minute, the ball crashing in off the post to cap a dominant display.

Levante goalkeeper Mathew Ryan prevented a heavier defeat with a pair of late saves, denying Raphinha and López in quick succession.

The win also marked a milestone for Lamine Yamal, who celebrated his 100th official victory for Barcelona at just 18 years old, becoming the youngest player to reach the landmark.

Levante slumped to a fourth straight defeat and remain deep in relegation trouble, while Barcelona's timely response restored belief in their title charge ahead of a crucial stretch in the campaign.

ISL: Football returns to Kochi but Blasters fall short

Fans return to Kaloor, but hosts stumble again at home

KOCHI

The roar returned to the stands of the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium in Kochi, but the result did not favour Kerala Blasters FC. In front of their home supporters after months of uncertainty, the Blasters went down 0-1 to Mumbai City FC, marking their second successive defeat of the season.

The decisive moment came just after the break when India international Lallianzuala Chhangte struck in the 47th minute, silencing an otherwise buoyant crowd in Kaloor. Despite a lacklustre first half, the contest sprang to life as both teams pushed forward in search of goals.

Mumbai had a golden opportunity in the 26th minute when they were awarded a penalty. However, goalkeeper Arsh Anwer Sheikh emerged as the hero for the hosts, pulling off a stunning save to deny Jorge Diaz from the spot and ignite the stadium. Chhangte later came close with a dangerous cross that skimmed past the left post.

Kerala's best chance of the opening half came from Spanish forward Victor Bertomeu, whose well-struck freekick was punched away by the Mumbai goalkeeper. Another set-piece from Bertomeu early in the second half deflected off the wall as the hosts struggled to carve out clear openings.

Late pressure saw the Blasters win three corners in stoppage time, but none yielded an equaliser. Though the result added to the growing frustration for the 'Yellow Tuskers', the sight of fans back in the stands — cheering relentlessly despite adversity — signalled that football's heartbeat has truly returned to Kochi.

Chennaiyin coach stresses unity, growth and sharper attacking edge

ISL: Miranda champions shared leadership as Chennaiyin seek revival

CHENNAI

For Chennaiyin FC head coach Clifford Miranda, success is built on collective responsibility as much as individual brilliance. The former India international underlined the importance of teamwork — not just among players, but within the coaching staff.

Miranda's philosophy was evident during Chennaiyin's narrow 0-1 defeat to Mumbai City FC, where assistant coach Anthony Fernandes and goalkeeping coach Rajat Guha frequently took charge of instructions from the touchline. Rather than centralising authority, Miranda believes in empowering those around him.

"I am not a superman who can do everything by myself. I have people around me who help me, the team, and the players. At the same time, I want to grow and I want everyone around me to grow," Miranda said on Sunday.

Roles within the backroom staff are clearly defined. Anthony oversees attacking set-pieces, while Guha manages defensive organisation, particularly during dead-ball situations. Miranda views this distribution of duties as a natural extension of their preparation on the training ground.

Despite controlling possession in promising areas against Mumbai, Chennaiyin lacked the cutting edge in the final third. Miranda acknowledged that improving chance conversion remains a priority as the league progresses.

"We did create chances, but those were not very clear. It is the most difficult part, and I know that we have to improve as the league goes on," he admitted.

With the season entering a decisive phase, Chennaiyin will look to translate their structured teamwork into tangible results and get their campaign back on track.

Floyd Mayweather ends retirement, eyes pro return after Tyson exhibition

NEW DELHI

Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. has announced a stunning retirement U-turn, confirming his intention to return to professional boxing following his upcoming exhibition bout against Mike Tyson. Mayweather, who retired in 2017 with a flawless 50-0 professional record after defeating Conor McGregor via 10th-round TKO, has since remained active through high-profile exhibition contests. However, the 48-year-old now appears ready to step back into sanctioned competition. The exhibition clash with Tyson, tentatively scheduled for April 2026 in Congo, will bring together two of boxing's most iconic names. Tyson, 59, and Mayweather have continued to command global attention long after their competitive peaks, and the bout is expected to generate significant commercial interest.

Mayweather's most recent outing came in August 2024 in Mexico against John Gotti III, a fight that maintained his public profile but did not affect his unbeaten professional record. While exhibitions have kept him in the spotlight, Mayweather has made it clear that he is targeting more than spectacle. "I still have what it takes to set more records in the sport of boxing," Mayweather said in a statement. "From my upcoming Mike Tyson event to my next professional fight afterwards – no one will generate a bigger gate, have a larger global broadcast audience and generate more money with each event – than my events. And I plan to keep doing it."

FIH Pro League: India lose to Australia in shootout thriller

HOBART

The India men's national field hockey team produced a spirited performance but fell short against Australia men's national field hockey team in a dramatic penalty shootout in their FIH Pro League clash.

Locked 2-2 at the end of regulation time, the contest was decided in the shootout, where Australia edged past India 5-4 in a tense finish.

India struck first through Amit Rohidas, who converted a penalty corner with a precise drag-flick in the 15th minute. The visitors defended resolutely through the opening half, absorbing sustained Australian pressure while threatening on the counter. Despite Australia dominating possession and registering multiple circle penetrations, India carried a 1-0 lead into the break.

The momentum swung further in India's favour late in the third quarter when Jugraj Singh doubled the advantage with another powerful drag-flick from a penalty corner in the 43rd minute.

Australia responded strongly in the final quarter. Joel Rintala reduced the deficit in the 47th minute and, after relentless pressure and repeated set-piece opportunities, struck again in the 56th minute to level the scores. Indian defenders, including a crucial goal-line block by Yashdeep Siwach, fought valiantly, while goalkeeper Mohith produced several outstanding saves to keep the match alive.

With neither side able to find a winner in regulation time, the shootout ensued. Both teams converted their first four attempts in a display of composure under pressure. However, Aditya Arjun Lalage's final attempt was denied by Australian goalkeeper Jed Snowden, sealing victory for the hosts.

The result marked another narrow setback for India, who will look to bounce back when they face Spain in their next fixture on Tuesday.

University of Canberra marks hat-trick year of UC Cricket Challenge in India

BENGALURU

Leaders from the University of Canberra and Cricket ACT come together to launch the UC Cricket Challenge, fostering new education opportunities for young cricketers.

The University of Canberra has announced the return of its flagship UC Cricket Challenge in Bengaluru for a third consecutive year, strengthening India–Australia ties through sport, education and youth development.

Delivered in partnership with Cricket ACT, the governing body for cricket in the Australian Capital Territory, the tournament has evolved into a distinctive platform blending competitive school-level cricket with academic exposure and cross-cultural exchange.

The 2026 edition will feature inter-school T10 matches in Bengaluru, alongside engagement activities introducing students to international education pathways and high-performance sporting environments. Since its inception, the initiative has provided promising young Indian cricketers with opportunities to connect with Australia's sport-led education ecosystem while competing at an elite level.

Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister Andrew Barr said the programme reflects Canberra's focus on innovation, opportunity and partnership. He noted that the Challenge strengthens international education links and positions Canberra as a destination where talent is nurtured both on the field and in the classroom.

Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Bill Shorten described the initiative as an embodiment of the university's values of aspiration and global connection. He emphasised the creation of 'study and play' pathways enabling students to pursue sporting excellence alongside academic ambition.

Cricket ACT CEO Olivia Thorton added that the tournament demonstrates cricket's power to build bridges between India and Australia while opening global opportunities for emerging talent.

Further details regarding dates, venues and participating schools will be announced soon, as the University of Canberra deepens its long-term engagement with India through sport-led education initiatives.

Lalbiaknia cancels Sánchez strike as Bengaluru, NEUFC share spoils

BENGALURU

A spirited contest at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium saw Bengaluru FC and NorthEast United FC battle to a 1-1 draw in the Indian Super League.

Coming off a confident 2-0 win over Sporting Club Delhi in their opener, Bengaluru began on the front foot in front of their home supporters. The breakthrough arrived in the 20th minute when Argentine midfielder Braian Emmanuel Sánchez finished off a well-worked move with precision, calmly slotting the ball past the goalkeeper to hand the Blues the lead.

Ryan Williams proved influential across the pitch, contributing both defensively and in attack. He came agonisingly close to doubling the advantage, only to see his powerful strike crash against the crossbar.

NorthEast United, coached by Juan Pedro Benali, responded with determination. The visitors grew stronger after halftime and tested the Bengaluru defence repeatedly. Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu stood tall, producing a key save to deny Asheer's header and preserve his side's slender lead. The equaliser came in the 68th minute through substitute Lalrinzuala Lalbiaknia, who marked his impact with a composed finish. His strike — his first in the ISL — capped a determined comeback from the Highlanders.

Benali later revealed that his side targeted perceived vulnerabilities in Bengaluru's backline, particularly in handling aerial deliveries and set-pieces. The absence of defender Rahul Bheke due to a knee injury appeared to unsettle the hosts at crucial moments.

Despite animated reactions from senior figures like Sunil Chhetri on the sidelines, head coach Renedy Singh expressed satisfaction with the overall display as both teams settled for a point apiece.

IGPL secures $100 million franchise boost across 10 cities

NEW DELHI

The Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) on Monday announced a landmark $100 million capital commitment from ten franchise partners, marking the largest private investment in Indian golf history.

Each franchise has pledged approximately $10 million over a ten-year period, signalling strong long-term confidence in the league's vision to professionalise and democratise golf in India. The ten-city format spans Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Goa, Bengaluru, Punjab and Gurugram, ensuring a broad national footprint across established and emerging markets.

Beyond operational funding, franchise partners have collectively committed an additional $250 million toward infrastructure development.

Brock Lesnar returns as WrestleMania season heats up on WWE Raw

ATLANTA

The road to WrestleMania 42 gathers momentum as WWE Raw heads to the State Farm Arena with major developments expected ahead of the Elimination Chamber premium live event.

The biggest headline is the much-anticipated return of Brock Lesnar. "The Beast Incarnate" has not been seen since his explosive outing at the Royal Rumble in Riyadh, where he battled emerging stars including Oba Femi. While WWE has not revealed the purpose of Lesnar's appearance, his timing suggests the start of a blockbuster WrestleMania storyline. Whether he seeks revenge on those who eliminated him from the Rumble or sets his sights on a new rival, his presence is certain to shake up the red brand.

The final men's Elimination Chamber qualifying match will also take centre stage. Bronson Reed, Jey Uso and El Grande Americano will clash in a high-stakes Triple Threat bout, with the winner joining the likes of Cody Rhodes and Randy Orton inside the unforgiving Chamber structure.

The women's division will determine its final entrant as IYO SKY, Kairi Sane and Raquel Rodriguez collide in another crucial Triple Threat contest. With championship implications looming, the bout promises intensity and technical excellence.

Meanwhile, all eyes will be on Liv Morgan. After her Royal Rumble triumph, Morgan is expected to announce her WrestleMania opponent. She must choose between Jade Cargill, the WWE Women's Champion, and Stephanie Vaquer, the Women's World Champion. With career-defining decisions and high-profile returns, Raw promises a pivotal night on the road to Las Vegas.

QUICK READ

Government earns Rs 4,405 crore from scrap

New Delhi

The government has earned Rs 4,405.28 crore from the sale of scrap under the Swachhata campaign from 2021 to January 2026. In December 2025 and January 2026 alone, Rs 200.21 crore was collected. According to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, 81,322 lakh files were removed in 5,188 offices during January. Cleanliness drives were held at 5,188 locations, freeing around 4.34 lakh square feet of space. The Ministry of Coal and Ministry of Heavy Industries were among the top contributors. In January, Rs 115.85 crore was earned from scrap disposal.

Markets rally on US tariff relief ruling

Mumbai

Indian stock markets started the week on a strong note on Monday, supported by positive global signals after the US Supreme Court struck down former President Donald Trump's tariffs. At 9.25 am, the Sensex was up 563 points, or 0.68 per cent, at 83,375. The Nifty rose 170 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 25,741. Broader markets also gained, with the Nifty Midcap 100 rising 0.12 per cent and the Nifty Smallcap 100 climbing 0.86 per cent. Most sectoral indices traded higher, except IT and chemicals. PSU banks led the rally, followed by metal and auto stocks. Analysts said India's decision to delay trade talks with the US was timely.

Young Koreans buying fewer new cars

Seoul

New car purchases by young people in South Korea fell to a 10-year low in 2025, industry data showed. According to auto data tracker Carisyou, people in their 20s registered 61,962 new cars last year, making up 5.6 per cent of total sales. This share has dropped steadily from 8.8 per cent in 2016. Those in their 30s bought 209,749 cars, or 19 per cent of total registrations, down 6.9 percentage points over the past decade. In contrast, older buyers increased their purchases. People in their 60s accounted for 18.5 per cent of new cars, while those in their 70s made up 4.6 per cent.

Gold, silver demand not at 'alarming' levels: Sitharaman

Government says gold prices stable despite festival surge, monitoring closely

NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government is keeping a close watch on gold prices but they have not crossed "certain limits."

She noted that gold often sees higher demand during festival seasons as many households treat it as a safe investment.

Speaking after the customary post-Budget meeting with the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Sitharaman said price movements are being monitored carefully. However, she stressed that the current rise is within acceptable levels.

On concerns related to IDFC First Bank, the Finance Minister said there is no systemic issue. She added that as a policy, the government does not comment on individual companies.

Sitharaman also said the RBI has adequate liquidity in the system and enough credit availability for the next five years to meet the country's needs. Commenting on the US tariff situation, she said the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is reviewing developments and that it is too early to make detailed remarks.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said that although gold prices have increased, the total value of gold imports has not risen significantly in recent months. He reiterated the central bank's commitment to providing enough liquidity for productive sectors of the economy.

On foreign investments, he said gross FDI inflows remain strong, with healthy growth last year and this year, supported by sufficient foreign exchange reserves.

Amended 'BharatNet' to strengthen AP connectivity

NEW DELHI

The Amended BharatNet programme will expand high-speed broadband access to every village in Andhra Pradesh, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday.

Jyotiraditya Scindia said the $16.9 billion (Rs 1.39 lakh crore) publicly funded programme aims to lay optical fibre cable (OFC) and provide broadband connectivity to all villages across India. He described it as a step towards democratising technology and giving citizens better digital opportunities.

A memorandum of cooperation was signed between Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), the Department of Telecommunications and the Andhra Pradesh government to speed up the rollout of the Amended BharatNet Programme in the state. Minister of State for Communications Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar said the agreement offers a clear and accountable framework for faster implementation under a state-led model. He added that the partnership will improve last-mile connectivity, expand 4G coverage and ensure reliable and affordable digital services for rural citizens.

Under the arrangement, the state government will help with Right of Way permissions, infrastructure access and coordination support. Most of the funding will come from DBN, with additional support from the state government as agreed.

The Centre has approved financial assistance of Rs 2,432 crore for the project in Andhra Pradesh. The programme is expected to provide over five lakh rural home fibre connections and boost digital governance, online education, digital payments and telemedicine in remote areas.

Firms favour performance-based pay, raising variable rewards and widening gaps, with bonuses increasingly linked to ESG goals

India's salary hike projected at 9.1% in 2026

NEW DELHI

India's average salary increase is expected to slow slightly to 9.1 per cent in 2026, with Global Capability Centers leading growth at 10.4 per cent.

Overall salary hikes are projected at 9.1 per cent in 2026, down from 9.3 per cent in 2025. The report by Ernst & Young (EY) said companies are becoming more careful with spending but continue to reward key talent.

Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are expected to see the highest salary growth at 10.4 per cent, supported by strong global demand and shortage of digital skills. The Financial Services sector may see hikes of around 10 per cent, followed by E-commerce at 9.9 per cent and Lifesciences and Pharmaceuticals at 9.7 per cent.

Traditional sectors such as Engineering, Manufacturing, Automotive and Infrastructure are likely to see lower increases due to cautious investments and pressure on margins.

The report said companies are moving away from uniform pay hikes. Instead, they are focusing on performance-based rewards, skill premiums and targeted corrections. Top performers may receive 1.5 to 1.6 times higher increments than average employees.

Variable pay is also rising. In 2025, average variable pay increased to 16.1 per cent of fixed salary, up from 14.8 per cent in 2024. For senior executives, variable pay reached 27.5 per cent, while individual contributors received around 11 per cent. The gap in payouts has widened, with top performers earning 120 to 150 per cent of their targets, while average performers received 60 to 80 per cent. About 35 per cent of large firms have now linked leadership bonuses to ESG-related targets. Companies said their main challenges include attracting talent and managing workforce changes due to AI and automation.

India-France amend tax avoidance pact

NEW DELHI

India and France have signed an Amending Protocol to update their Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

The agreement was signed during the recent visit of the French President to India. Ravi Agrawal, Chairperson of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, signed the Protocol on behalf of their governments.

According to the Finance Ministry, the revised pact gives full taxing rights on capital gains from the sale of shares to the country where the company is a resident. It also removes the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause from the earlier protocol, resolving related issues.

The amendment changes dividend taxation by replacing the earlier single 10 per cent rate with a two-tier structure — 5 per cent for shareholders holding at least 10 per cent equity, and 15 per cent in other cases.

The definition of "Fees for Technical Services" has been aligned with the India-US tax treaty. The scope of "Permanent Establishment" has also been widened to include Service Permanent Establishment.

Further, the Protocol updates rules on exchange of information and introduces a new article on assistance in collection of taxes, in line with global standards. It also incorporates relevant provisions of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Multilateral Instrument already adopted by both countries.

The changes will take effect after both sides complete their internal legal procedures. The government said the updated treaty will provide greater tax certainty and help boost investment, technology exchange and economic cooperation between India and France.

Cement sector outlook positive on capex boost

NEW DELHI

The outlook for India's cement sector remains positive, supported by steady demand, improving prices and higher capital expenditure allocation in the FY27 Budget, according to a report by Nuvama Institutional Equities.

The report said cement demand and prices improved in January 2026, showing stronger momentum in the sector. This came despite a sharp fall in capital expenditure by the central government and central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), which declined about 25 per cent and 40 per cent year-on-year, respectively, in January. However, state government capital expenditure remained supportive, rising around 15 per cent year-on-year in December 2025. Between April and December 2025, both central and state government capex grew about 15 per cent year-on-year, while CPSE capex fell marginally by 2 per cent. Real estate activity remained weak, with housing launches declining 9 per cent year-on-year in calendar year 2025, after a 7 per cent fall in 2024. Despite this slowdown, the report said overall cement demand is expected to stay strong.

India growth fuels wealth demand

India's rapid economic growth is expected to create more wealthy investors and increase demand for professional wealth management services, SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday

MUMBAI

Speaking at the Portfolio Managers' Conclave in Mumbai, Tuhin Kanta Pandey said India continues to be one of the fastest-growing major economies and is on track to become the world's third-largest economy. He noted that this strong growth will change the country's wealth pattern and lead to a rise in affluent investors.

Pandey said this new group of high-net-worth individuals will look for professionally managed investment options instead of standard products. They are expected to seek more advanced and customised strategies for managing their money.

To address this shift, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is reviewing several rules, including LODR, settlement norms and Portfolio Management Services (PMS) regulations. He said the review aims to simplify and update rules based on feedback from investors and industry participants. A consultation paper on proposed changes to PMS rules will soon be released for public comments.

On market safety, Pandey said SEBI is exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence to detect market wrongdoing in real time, instead of only reacting after violations occur. He clarified that the PMS review is still in progress and its final scope has not yet been decided.

Pandey also said SEBI and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are jointly working to develop a corporate bond index and related products that can be traded on stock exchanges. He added that SEBI will also examine concerns raised by brokers regarding RBI rules on collateral and bank guarantees.

RBI to reflect revised CPI in April

NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said the central bank will factor in the revised base years for CPI and GDP in its April monetary policy projections.

Speaking after the post-Budget meeting with the Finance Minister, Sanjay Malhotra said the revision of the inflation targeting range, following the update in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) base year, is currently under review. However, he clarified that the methodological changes, though important in terms of better coverage and representation, are not significant enough on their own to require a change in the inflation target.

He said the Reserve Bank of India had earlier released a discussion paper and submitted its recommendations to the government. The final decision on the inflation target will be taken by the authorities.

Malhotra added that the updated CPI and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) base years and methodology will be reflected in the RBI's next set of projections, which will be announced in April. He welcomed the revisions, saying they would better capture household spending patterns and reduce volatility in inflation estimates.

On the banking sector, the Governor said banks are well-capitalised and have enough funds to support the credit needs of the economy. Responding to concerns about high credit-deposit ratios, he explained that credit and deposit growth usually move together over time, though short-term differences may occur due to business cycles and other factors.

He noted that deposit rates have increased along with lending rates. Besides deposits, banks also use other sources of funding. Malhotra assured that banks are in a strong position to meet the country's credit demand.

India to lead APAC office supply

NEW DELHI

Grade-A office space supply in the Asia Pacific region is set to reach a record 61.3 million square feet in 2026, with India expected to contribute around 40 per cent, according to a CBRE report.

The 2026 Asia Pacific Real Estate Market Outlook by CBRE said total supply will rise 10.8 per cent from 55.3 million square feet in 2025. India and mainland China together are projected to account for more than 75 per cent of the total new supply next year.

Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO – India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa at CBRE, said India's strong demand drivers and large talent pool continue to attract global occupiers.

Among the top five cities for new office supply in 2026, three are from India. Bengaluru is expected to lead with 12.1 million square feet, followed by Shanghai at 10 million square feet and Delhi-NCR at 7.1 million square feet. Growth in Bengaluru will be supported by Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

Despite record supply, the report noted that many developed markets may still face tight availability of quality office space. Companies are focusing more on premium buildings in prime locations, especially as stricter office attendance policies return.

CBRE's 2026 Asia Pacific Investor Intentions Survey showed that office assets have become the most preferred investment option in the region, overtaking industrial and logistics for the first time in six years.

EXPORT BOOM

India's iPhone exports hit $23b in 2025: Report

NEW DELHI

Apple's iPhone emerged as India's most valuable single export item in 2025, with shipments worth about $23 billion, according to industry data.

The strong growth in exports was mainly driven by higher local production and government support under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme. Industry sources said Apple also expanded manufacturing in India as part of its strategy to reduce dependence on China. Smartphones became India's top export category for the first time, crossing $30.13 billion in total exports between January and December 2025. This pushed automotive diesel fuel to second place. Apple alone accounted for around 76 per cent of total smartphone exports from the country. The company's five-year PLI scheme is set to end in March 2026. Apple currently has five iPhone assembly plants in India. Three are operated by Tata Group companies and two by Foxconn. These plants are supported by nearly 45 suppliers, including many MSMEs that provide components for both domestic and global markets.

India has now become the world's second-largest mobile phone producer. More than 99 per cent of smartphones sold in the country are now made locally, showing a strong shift in manufacturing capabilities.

Consumer trends have also changed. According to Counterpoint Research, the iPhone 16 base model was the top-selling smartphone in India in 2025. Buyers are increasingly moving away from budget phones to premium devices.

During the December quarter, Apple recorded its highest-ever revenues in regions including the Americas, Europe, Japan and Asia Pacific. Apple CEO Tim Cook said the company saw strong double-digit growth in India and set quarterly revenue records for iPhone, Mac and iPad, along with a record in services. Apple is set to open another retail store in Mumbai on February 26.

Gavaskar Slams 'Overconfident' India After Heavy Defeat to SA

Batters failed to adapt, ego cost India dearly, badly

AHMEDABAD

Sunil Gavaskar believes India's batters paid the price for overconfidence and a refusal to adapt to conditions in their crushing 76-run loss to South Africa in the T20 World Cup. The defeat ended India's 12-match unbeaten streak in the tournament as South Africa outplayed the defending champions in all departments.

Gavaskar said India should have taken cues from the way South Africa rebuilt after early setbacks. After losing quick wickets, David Miller and Dewald Brevis stitched together a decisive 97-run partnership to guide the Proteas to 187/7. In contrast, India crumbled under pressure and were bowled out for 111 in 18.5 overs.

India's top order faltered inside the powerplay, slipping to 26/3 after the dismissals of Ishan Kishan (0), Abhishek Sharma (15) and Tilak Varma (1). Gavaskar criticised the reckless approach, saying the required rate was manageable and did not demand desperate stroke-play. "You don't have to score 70 in the powerplay every time. Even 55-60 would have been a solid platform," he remarked, adding that batters needed to shed their ego and assess tricky surfaces better.

Looking ahead to the clash against Zimbabwe, Gavaskar suggested recalling Axar Patel to strengthen the balance, possibly at the expense of Washington Sundar. While he praised Arshdeep Singh for his rhythm, he felt Sundar had not been utilised effectively. Gavaskar insisted that adaptability, not aggression alone, defines successful T20 cricket.

David Miller Reveals Proteas' Plan to Dismantle Varun

AHMEDABAD

Still mind, sharp intent helped counter mystery spin threat

David Miller said clarity of thought and calculated aggression were central to South Africa's plan to neutralise India's mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy in their T20 World Cup Super Eight clash.

South Africa stunned the defending champions with a commanding 76-run victory after posting 187/7. Chakravarthy, who had enjoyed a strong record against the Proteas before this contest, was expected to play a decisive role. Instead, he conceded 47 runs in four overs as Miller (63 off 35 balls) and Dewald Brevis (45 off 29) attacked him with authority.

Miller explained that the team discussion centred on showing intent if the spinner erred in length. "If he bowls a bad ball, we've got to put it away. It wasn't spinning too much, so we could trust the line," he said, adding that once they sensed limited assistance from the surface, the decision was clear: take him down before he settled.

The 36-year-old's innings, studded with seven fours and three sixes, was his first major contribution of the tournament. He credited disciplined basics — limited movement, still head position, controlled breathing and hard running — for thriving under pressure.

Miller also stressed that beating India was about execution rather than emotion. "India are beatable. They are an incredible team, but we focused on staying in our lane and doing the simple things well," he noted. With a seasoned core that has played together for years, South Africa demonstrated composure in high-stakes moments. For Miller, it was proof that smart planning and fearless intent can dismantle even the most potent bowling threats.

Hanne Vandewinkel Outclasses Vaishnavi 6-0, 6-1 to Lift KPB Trust ITF W100 Crown

BENGALURU

Hanne Vandewinkel delivered a masterclass to dismantle India's Vaishnavi Adkar 6-0, 6-1 in just 56 minutes and clinch the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 title at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium.

The 21-year-old Belgian, ranked 124 in the world, entered the final wary of Vaishnavi's giant-killing run. The Indian wildcard had stunned higher-ranked opponents including Mai Hontama, Taylah Preston and Lanlana Tararudee en route to becoming the first Indian woman to reach an ITF W100 final.

But Vandewinkel left no room for an upset. A second-year medical student at the University of Leuven, she combined high-octane serving with razor-sharp groundstrokes to neutralise Vaishnavi's potent backhand. Mixing sliced returns with controlled aggression, the Belgian dictated rallies from the outset.

Vaishnavi, ranked 690, struggled to find rhythm and failed to hold serve in the opening set, which vanished in just 20 minutes. Encouraged by mentor Rohan Bopanna from the stands, the Pune player briefly sparked hope by holding serve early in the second set and earning three break points in the following game.

However, Vandewinkel swiftly extinguished the challenge, reeling off five consecutive points to steady herself before cruising through the remaining games. Her agility, court coverage and tactical clarity proved overwhelming for the home hopeful.

While Vaishnavi's fairytale run ended short of the trophy, Vandewinkel's ruthless display underlined her rising stature on the international circuit as she lifted the prestigious W100 crown in commanding fashion.

Eileen Gu Makes History With Olympic Freeski Halfpipe Gold

LIVIGNO, ITALY

Eileen Gu soared to victory in the women's freeski halfpipe final at the 2026 Winter Olympics, becoming the most decorated freestyle skier in Games history. The 22-year-old posted 94.75 at Livigno Snow Park to win gold ahead of China's Li Fanghui (93.00), while Britain's Zoe Atkin took bronze with 92.50. After managing just 30.00 on her opening run, Gu rebounded with 94.00 before sealing gold with a near-flawless final effort. Her sixth Olympic medal — three gold and three silver — moves her past Mikael Kingsbury and Xu Mengtao in the all-time freestyle standings.

Ranji Trophy Final: Star-Studded Karnataka Hold All Aces Against Gritty J&K

HUBBALLI

Eight-time champions Karnataka will start overwhelming favourites against first-time finalists Jammu and Kashmir when the Ranji Trophy final begins on Tuesday, but the underdogs' remarkable journey promises a compelling contest.

Karnataka's tag as favourites is rooted in a season of consistency, depth and resilience. After a slow start against Saurashtra, they surged past heavyweights like Mumbai and Uttarakhand with authority. The batting core — KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Devdutt Padikkal and Ravichandran Smaran — has been prolific throughout the campaign.

Rahul has amassed 457 runs in just three matches, while Karun and Devdutt have anchored crucial victories. Smaran's monumental 950-run season underscores Karnataka's dominance with the bat. Despite a middling run for Mayank Agarwal, the leadership transition to Padikkal has been seamless, with the young captain blending tactical clarity with personal form.

However, Jammu and Kashmir arrive with belief, having stunned Bengal and Madhya Pradesh en route to their maiden final in 67 years. Spearheading their charge is pacer Auqib Nabi, whose 55 wickets make him the season's standout bowler. On a surface expected to aid seamers early, Nabi's duel with Karnataka's top order could shape the contest.

Karnataka's bowling, led by Prasidh Krishna and bolstered by the all-round brilliance of Shreyas Gopal, adds further balance. Gopal's 46 wickets and 442 runs highlight his match-winning influence.

While Jammu and Kashmir rely on veteran captain Paras Dogra to steady nerves, Karnataka can draw on players seasoned in past title triumphs.

Experience may tilt the scales, but J&K's fearless spirit ensures the final will be anything but predictable.

Gambhir, Coaches Signal India's Top-Order Changes

AHMEDABAD

The Indian team think-tank is set to deliberate on dropping at least one out-of-form batter and revisiting its left-heavy top-order template after a 76-run thrashing by South Africa in the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage.

While head coach Gautam Gambhir did not speak directly, his deputies Ryan ten Doeschate and Sitanshu Kotak admitted that changes are under serious consideration ahead of must-win games against Zimbabwe and West Indies.

The spotlight is firmly on Abhishek Sharma (15 runs in four matches) and Tilak Varma (107 runs in five matches at a strike rate of 118), whose struggles have hurt India's starts. Designated finisher Rinku Singh has also endured a torrid run, aggregating just 24 runs off 29 balls at a strike rate of 82.75.

Kotak conceded the team has reached a point where it must assess whether to persist with the same combination or attempt something different. Ten Doeschate was more forthcoming, hinting that bringing in Sanju Samson could offer tactical balance as a right-hander in a predominantly left-handed top order.

UNITED STATES DEFEAT CANADA FOR GOLD

MILAN

The United States clinched men's Olympic ice hockey gold for the first time in 46 years as Jack Hughes scored a dramatic overtime winner to seal a 2-1 victory over Canada.

Hughes struck just 1 minute and 41 seconds into three-on-three overtime at the Santagiulia Arena, delivering the Americans their first Olympic crown since the iconic 1980 "Miracle on Ice" triumph over the Soviet Union in Lake Placid.

The high-stakes clash began in a charged atmosphere, with a largely Canadian crowd booing the U.S. team during warm-ups. However, chants of "USA, USA" soon echoed around the arena, growing louder when Matt Boldy opened the scoring in the first period. Boldy weaved past two defenders before beating goaltender Jordan Binnington to give the Americans a 1-0 lead.

U.S. netminder Connor Hellebuyck produced a string of saves, stopping his first 24 shots before finally being beaten by Cale Makar's wrist shot in the second period.

The Americans nearly regained the lead late in regulation when Brock Faber's slap shot struck both posts but stayed out.

In overtime, Hughes applied the finishing touch, sparking wild celebrations among teammates and supporters. After the win, U.S. players honoured late NHL star Johnny Gaudreau by holding up a jersey bearing his name and number 13.

MS Dhoni Available But May Not Play All Games for Chennai Super Kings

AHMEDABAD

The familiar question surrounding MS Dhoni's Indian Premier League future has resurfaced ahead of the 2026 season, with sources confirming his availability for Chennai Super Kings but hinting he may not play every league match.

The 44-year-old stalwart, who will turn 45 later this year, has informed the franchise of his readiness for the upcoming campaign. However, with marquee recruit Sanju Samson joining the CSK ranks, the team management is unlikely to deploy Dhoni across all fixtures. A senior franchise source confirmed that Dhoni will report to Chennai before the season begins. Yet, the presence of multiple wicketkeeper-batters offers CSK flexibility. Samson is expected to take over the gloves in matches where Dhoni is rested. The squad also includes Urvil Patel and highly-rated youngster Kartik Sharma, who is being groomed as a finisher alongside Shivam Dube. Over the past two editions, the Impact Player rule has reduced the physical burden on Dhoni, limiting his batting appearances to situational cameos. Nonetheless, the rigours of wicketkeeping, combined with his recurring knee and back concerns, make selective participation a practical approach. What appears certain is Dhoni's presence in most home games at Chepauk, where his bond with the Chennai faithful remains unmatched. Even a brief appearance from the legendary former India captain is enough to electrify the atmosphere.

While speculation about his swansong continues, Dhoni's availability — even in a limited capacity — strengthens CSK's leadership core and keeps fans eagerly anticipating another chapter in his storied IPL journey.

Eberechi Eze's Derby Double Gets Arsenal Title Bid Back on Track

LONDON

Eberechi Eze struck twice as Arsenal thrashed Tottenham Hotspur 4-1 in a pulsating North London derby, easing Premier League title nerves and moving five points clear at the summit.

Eze, who had not found the net since his hat-trick in the reverse fixture in November, rediscovered his scoring touch at the perfect time. The forward, who nearly joined Tottenham last August, opened the scoring in the 32nd minute with a crisp volley that ignited the Emirates.

Spurs responded swiftly, however, as Randal Kolo Muani capitalised on a rare error by Declan Rice to equalise just two minutes later.

The contest tilted decisively after the break. Viktor Gyokeres restored Arsenal's advantage with a sublime curling effort before Eze tapped in his second to give the hosts breathing space. Gyokeres then completed his brace in stoppage time to seal an emphatic victory. The win lifted Arsenal to 61 points from 28 games, five ahead of second-placed Manchester City, who have a game in hand. Tottenham, meanwhile, remain 16th under new manager Igor Tudor, just four points above the relegation zone.

For Arsenal, the statement derby triumph not only reasserted their supremacy in North London but also reinforced belief that their title charge remains firmly on course as the season enters its decisive phase.

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